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THE

WORKS

OF THE RIGHT REVEREND

THOMAS NEWTON, D. D.

Late LORD BISHOP of BRISTOL,
And DEAN of St. PAUL's, LONDON.

WITH SOME

ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE,

AND

ANECDOTES of several of his FRIENDS,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

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THOMAS NEWTON, D.D.

ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE

AND

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DISSERTATIONS

Chiefly on ſome PARTS of the

NEW TESTAMENT.

NEW TESTAMENT

DISSERTATIONS

DISSERTATION I.

On the Expediency of the CHRISTIAN REVELATION.

"GOD who at ſundry times and in divers manners ſpake in "time paſt unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in theſe laſt "days," ſays the apoſtle (Heb. I. 1, 2.) "ſpoken unto us by his "Son:" And God who doth nothing in vain, and never beſtows excellent things for little and mean purpoſes, would not certainly after ſo many revelations have given us ſtill another, if another ſtill had not been expedient for us. But yet men there have been, and it is to be feared there ſtill are, conceited of themſelves and of their own parts and knowlege, who maintain that a divine revelation is altogether ſuperfluous and needleſs, that natural reaſon alone is ſufficient for all the ends of life and ſalvation, that there muſt be ſome end or uſe in all the divine diſpenſations, and conſequently the Chriſtian diſpenſation, as being perfectly uſeleſs, can never be the diſpenſation of God.

Thus far we muſt agree with them indeed, that there muſt be ſome end or uſe in all the divine diſpenſations, and it would be a ſtrong prejudice againſt the Chriſtian religion, if it was of no uſe or advantage to the world. But ſurely we are not always the beſt judges of the fitneſs or unfitneſs of things. The all-wiſe Being who created us knoweth better what is convenient for us, than we do for ourſelves. A thing may be very uſeful, though perhaps we may not immediately diſcover the uſes of it. And methinks it would become us to ſubmit our reaſon to the divine reaſon: and rather to conclude, that becauſe God hath given us a revelation therefore it is expedient, than becauſe we

may not think it expedient, that therefore he hath given us no revelation at all: or in other words, becauſe we are certain of its reality rather to make that an argument for believing and aſſerting its expediency, than becauſe we are not certain of its expediency to make that an argument for diſbelieving and denying its reality.

This general anſwer might ſatisfy any modeſt and candid inquirer: but for the ſake of truth, for the ſake of religion we will be more particular; and not only ſuppoſe that a divine revelation may be of uſe to the world, but evince that it really is ſo, and that however Jews and Infidels may reject the Chriſtian religion, yet it was highly expedient if not neceſſary, for the Jew firſt and alſo for the Gentile.

I. The Jews were the people to whom (Rom. III. 2.) "were committed the oracles of God;" the only people who preſerved the worſhip of the true God of the univerſe in any purity; and yet I ſay another revelation was wanting even for *them*.

For 1. The imperfection of the Jewiſh religion was enough to induce the hope of a better and more perfect diſpenſation. However ſuitable and proper it might be for the people to whom it was given, and for the times when it was given, yet it is evident it was never deſigned to be of general or perpetual obligation. It was overladen with forms and ceremonies, and from the ſpiritual nature of God a more ſpiritual religion might one time or other be reaſonably expected. It was addreſſed to the Iſraelites as a nation, and as to a nation the motives to virtue and obedience, the diſſuaſives from ſin and diſobedience were founded chiefly upon temporal promiſes and threatenings, and conſequently there are the fewer intimations in that law of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments. Some farther diſcoveries of this kind might therefore be rationally hoped for; and life and immortality which only dawned upon us under one diſpenſation, might be more fully brought to light under another. The moral law of the Jews was alſo deficient in purity and ſhort of perfection; and ſome things were allowed, as polygamy for inſtance and divorces, on account of the hardneſs of their hearts. Several parts of the Jewiſh worſhip too were confined to the temple at Jeruſalem, and thither all the males were obliged to repair three times a year. That religion conſequently

ſequently could be never of very great extent, and ſome more comprehenſive ſcheme would be more worthy of God as well as more beneficial to men.

2. There were alſo ſeveral prophecies and intimations of another and better ſtate of things to ſucceed. Moſes himſelf had declared unto the Iſraelites, (Deut. XVIII. 15, &c.) that "the Lord God "would raiſe them up a prophet like unto him," and to that prophet they "ſhould hearken" every one upon pain of exciſion. "Yea and "all the prophets from Samuel and thoſe that follow after," as St. Peter obſerves (Acts III. 24.) "as many as have ſpoken, have likewiſe fore-"told of theſe days. It is written in the prophets," as our Saviour ſaith, (John VI. 45.) "and they ſhall be all taught of God." The whole ſervice of the Jews manifeſtly pointed to the Meſſiah. Their ſacrifices, and indeed all their rites and ceremonies were ſo many types of better things to come. They are only the ſhadow and the figure, and we muſt look farther for the body and the ſubſtance. So far therefore was the Jewiſh religion from making another revelation unneceſſary, that we ſee it renders another abſolutely neceſſary; and if ſome other is not from God, then neither was that from God.

3. There was accordingly among the Jews, eſpecially about the time of our Saviour's appearance, an earneſt expectation of the Meſſiah; and the Meſſiah was to inſtruct them in all things, to reſolve all their doubts, to clear all their difficulties, and to perfect the ſyſtem of their religion. The woman of Samaria ſpake not only her own but the notion of them all, when ſhe ſaid (John IV. 25.) "I know that Meſſias "cometh which is called Chriſt, when he is come he will tell us all "things."

Theſe arguments are ſufficient to prove the expediency of another revelation for the Jews, as far as their caſe is diſtinct from the reſt of mankind. And we have the Jews themſelves acknowleging as much; for tho' the time prefixed is expired, yet they ſtill live in expectation of their Meſſiah, and pretend that his coming hath been deferred all this while for the ſins of the people. But if it was not for the ſins of the people, would the Meſſiah ever come at all? and how then can their ſins be the reaſon for his coming, and at the ſame the reaſon for

delaying

delaying his coming? One would think they ſhould make his coming more neceſſary, and inſtead of delaying it would be rather an argument for haſtening it.

II. Well, but the Infidel may ſay, the Jews indeed in conſequence of their admitting one revelation may be obliged to admit another, as one abſurdity generally begets another: but concluding for them is not concluding for all mankind; and how doth it appear that natural religion is defective without revealed? We have the eyes of reaſon, and want not the ſpectacles of revelation. Which leadeth us to my ſecond general head, to ſhow the uſe and expediency of a divine revelation to the Gentiles; that is to the reſt of mankind as well as to the Jews: and in this we will proceed leiſurely by ſeveral ſteps and degrees of proof.

1. There are ſome things which are neceſſary to be known, but yet are not poſſible to be known by us, without the help of a divine revelation. Natural reaſon informs us, that man as the creature is to worſhip God as the creator; but it doth not likewiſe inform us what manner of worſhip will be moſt agreeable to the ſupreme Being, and therefore different forms and rituals have prevailed in different ages and countries. "Wherewith ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow "myſelf before the high God?" (Micah VI. 6.) is a queſtion that the natural man will aſk, but the natural man cannot eaſily anſwer: and certainly none ſo able to define, what particular ſort of worſhip will be moſt pleaſing to God, as God himſelf. Again; All men are ſinners in a greater or leſſer degree; and when they have tranſgreſſed and fallen from their duty, how can they raiſe and reſtore themſelves to the divine favor? There is nothing in religion that is of greater concern to us, and at the ſame time perhaps nothing that more confounds and baffles unaſſiſted reaſon. We may hope indeed that the God of mercies will receive us upon our repentance and future obedience; but this is only hope, this is not certainty and aſſurance to a wounded conſcience; for we were obliged to pay the tribute of our obedience if we had continued innocent, and we ſeem obliged to give ſome farther ſatisfaction to offended juſtice as we have been criminals. Here therefore natural reaſon ſtoppeth ſhort, feeleth her own inſufficiency, and imploreth the aid

aid of divine revelation. We ſee then that the ſcheme of natural religion is defective in two very material points, as it neither informs us exactly how we are to worſhip God, nor how we may reconcile ourſelves to him when we have offended; and how much ſoever ſome men may magnify it in prejudice to revelation, it is neither ſo fit for the ſaint nor the ſinner.

2. As there are ſome things not poſſible to be known by us without the help of a divine revelation, ſo there are others whereof natural reaſon was always very doubtful. We need inſtance only in that important doctrin of the immortality of the ſoul, the main hinge upon which morality turneth. The immortality of the ſoul may poſſibly be demonſtrated, but we do not find that any of the ancient philoſophers did really demonſtrate it. Sometimes they riſe as it were above themſelves, and ſpeak of it with the greateſt clearneſs and certainty; then again they ſeem to loſe ſight of their own arguments, and ſink into the utmoſt perplexity and diffidence. In one page they are all exultation and triumph, all diſſatisfaction and deſpair in another. And in theſe later ages, after all theſe improvements in philoſophy and metaphyſics, there have yet been eminent (1) maſters of reaſon, who have aſſerted and maintained, that neither the immateriality nor immortality of the ſoul can be demonſtratively proved by reaſon. Of ſuch ſignal uſe and ſervice might a divine revelation be to mankind, as in explaining what is hard, ſo likewiſe in fixing what is doubtful: and ſo juſt and true is the aſſertion of the apoſtle (2 Tim. I. 10.) that it is "Jeſus Chriſt who "hath brought life and immortality to light through the goſpel."

3. But ſuppoſing that every thing in natural religion was plain and nothing was doubtful, yet to be capable of being known and to be actually known are two very different things. It hath been (2) affirmed (and affirmed I believe very truly) that morality is capable of demonſtration as well as the mathematics: but which of the ancient philoſophers hath preſented us with a body of morality pure and genuin without any mixture or allay of error? Their works of this kind, even thoſe of the beſt and wiſeſt of them, are like the image in Nebuchadnezzar's

(1) Mr. Locke particularly. (2) Mr. Locke again.

dream,

dream, of various parts, clay, iron, braſs, ſilver, and not all of fine gold. Of late indeed we have had ſeveral excellent attempts in the moral way: but theſe productions are not altogether the efforts of unaſſiſted nature; they are only ſo many beams ſtolen from heaven, ſo many lights kindled and reflected from revelation. For it is one thing to diſcover truths by the bare exerciſe of reaſon, and another when truths are already diſcovered to trace out their agreeableneſs to reaſon; and this is the utmoſt that hath been done by any of thoſe, who have delineated beſt the religion of nature. A man muſt entertain a high opinion indeed of his own parts and abilities, who can fancy that if he had lived before the goſpel or lived without the goſpel, he could have made greater diſcoveries than Socrates, Plato, Cicero, or any of thoſe burning and ſhining lights of the heathen world.

4. But ſuppoſing that men of parts and learning were able to comprehend the whole of morality and natural religion, will it follow that the common people are able to comprehend it too? If philoſophers can make out theſe things to themſelves, can they explain them likewiſe to the capacities of all others? And have the generality of mankind abilities, or leiſure, or inclination to begin ſuch diſquiſitions, or to purſue them if begun, or to complete them if purſued? Was every man among the ancients a Plutarch? Is every man among the moderns a Woollaſton? Or rather do not the neceſſities of the back and the belly naturally engage more men, than the improvement of the head and the heart? Would not a divine revelation therefore be a valuable donation, and of prodigious benefit to the bulk of mankind? All men have ſouls to be ſaved, but all men have not underſtandings for long trains and deductions of reaſon. Books of ethics, and treatiſes of the laws of nature, are fit only for contemplative men to write and contemplative men to read: but a divine revelation may be of general uſe, and may exhibit to every man his duty in ſuch plain and legible characters that "he who runneth may read it."

5. But ſuppoſing that the religion of nature was delineated or even deſcribed to the capacities of the meaneſt as well as of the greateſt, yet what ſhall force obedience to it, and make it to be generally practiſed,

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as well as generally known? No philoſopher hath authority to impoſe his philoſophy upon the world. The force of argument and perſuaſion will operate but little; the beauty of virtue will operate ſtill leſs. Human laws can only influence our outward behaviour, and not at all affect the mind and conſcience. They ſeem deſigned rather to keep men from being very bad, than to make them very good. The cauſe of virtue would therefore be left in great meaſure deſtitute, if God ſhould not interpoſe. The authority of God bindeth the whole man, reacheth to the ſoul as well as the body, and is not confined to this life but extends to the other. How doth even the excellent (3) Brutus cry out in his pathetic ſtrain, 'O miſerable virtue, I have courted thee as a ſub-'ſtantial good and find thee only an empty name!' and indeed it can never be ſufficiently ſupported againſt the torrent of a wicked world on the foot of natural religion alone. But now in the Chriſtian diſpenſation the ſcale is quite turned on the ſide of virtue; there is the plaineſt deſcription of our duty, and the ſtrongeſt motives to practiſe it; there is authority to oblige, and example to engage us; there is the pardon of all paſt ſins, and the aſſiſtance of divine grace for the future; "there is the promiſe of the life that now is and of that which "is to come," (1 Tim. IV. 8.) a heaven to allure us and a hell to deter us. In a word there is every thing that can awaken our hopes or fears, our deſires or averſions. Every thing is done, that can be done conſiſtent with human liberty; and if all theſe motives and ſanctions have not their due influence and effect, Chriſtians muſt be infinitely the worſt of men.

6. But ſuppoſing that natural religion made our duty as plain and enforced it as much as the moſt confident Deiſt can pretend, yet I aſk whether a divine revelation might not make it ſtill plainer and enforce it ſtill more? Reaſon, if you will, ſhall be all pure bullion; but yet might not the *image* and *ſuperſcription* of *the King of kings* add to its value, and make it paſs more current in the world? Nay even ſuppoſing that revelation taught nothing more and preſſed nothing more than natural reaſon; yet are not all poſſible helps and advantages requiſite to ſupport

(3) Dion. Lib. 47. ad finem.

and recommend virtue? and is not the authority of reaſon and revelation together ſuperior to the authority of reaſon alone? One of them, as one eye or one hand, may perhaps ſerve the neceſſities of life, but certainly two are better and more uſeful and convenient.

Laſtly, whatever our modern infidels may think of themſelves, the general ſuffrage of mankind from the beginning of the world to this day hath been directly againſt them in favor of revelation. Natural religion may be the religion of ſome new Atlantis or Utopia, but it never yet ſubſiſted alone, without a revelation of one kind or other, in any age or nation. Sacrifices and other religious inſtitutions we find in the earlieſt accounts of time. And even where revelations have not been real, they have yet been pretended, not only in theſe parts of the world which are better known, but likewiſe in the moſt remote regions of the Eaſt and Weſt Indies. And the philoſophers themſelves, who have ſeen through the fraud and contrivance of the religion of their country, have yet expreſſed their deſire and longing, their hope and expectation of a true revelation. Socrates and Plato have ſuch paſſages to this purpoſe as would almoſt make a Deiſt bluſh; ſo ſenſible were thoſe great men of the goodneſs of God to give a revelation, and of the wants and neceſſities of men to receive it. Truths indeed are not to be meaſured or determined by numbers; but thus much at leaſt the argument alleged will prove, that if revelation be not true, yet the generality of mankind have wiſhed it true; and they would never have wiſhed it, unleſs they had wanted it: and ſo to oppoſe revelation is really and truly to oppoſe common ſenſe; a few infidels againſt the world, the world againſt a few infidels.

The deficiency of natural religion and the expediency of revealed, I hope, have been fully proved and eſtabliſhed: And if a divine revelation be deſireable on ſo many accounts, the leaſt ſurely that men can do is to try and examin with impartiality and candor whatever hath any fair pretences to be thought a divine revelation. Now if any religion can pretend to be a revelation from God, the Chriſtian religion may certainly above all others. For whether we conſider the internal or external proofs of it; the goodneſs of the doctrin itſelf, ſo agreeable to

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the nature of God, and ſo perfective of the nature of man; or the prophecies and miracles and other ſignatures of the Deity ſtamped upon it; the Chriſtian religion muſt prevail over all other religions, as the divine rod of Aaron ſwallowed up the ſerpents of the magicians. To chooſe the Mohammedan religion or any other before the Chriſtian is ſomewhat like the ſin of the Jews, to chooſe a Barabbas before Jeſus, a vile robber and murderer before the Son of God bleſſed for ever.

As for us who are ſatisfied that there is a divine revelation, and that the Chriſtian religion is that revelation, we ſhould render unto God the tribute of our thanks and praiſe for calling us (1 Pet. II. 9, 10.) "out "of darkneſs into his marvelous light, who in time paſt were not a "people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy "but now have obtained mercy." And we ſhould remember to treat this revelation always with the reverence that is due to the majeſty of the great revealer; we ſhould peruſe it often; we ſhould conſider who ſpeaketh to us there as well as what is ſpoken. "Our delight" (Pſal. I. 2.) "ſhould be in the law of the Lord, and in his law we ſhould "meditate day and night." And we ſhould not only peruſe it and meditate upon it, but ſo peruſe it and meditate upon it, that it may have the proper influence on our lives and actions. We are called out of the darkneſs of barbariſm into the light of the goſpel; "we ſhould "therefore" (Eph. V. 8.) "walk as children of light." Our practice ſhould bear proportion to our knowlege. Thoſe ſervants, who knew their lord's will and do it not (Luke XII. 47.) "ſhall be beaten with "many ſtripes. It will be better for us (2 Pet. II. 21.) never to "have known the way of righteouſneſs, than after we have known it "to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto us."

DISSERTATION II.

On the Expediency of writing the SCRIPTURES.

IT is happy for mankind, that matters of ſuch importance as the Jewiſh and Chriſtian revelations are committed to writing, and not left to the frail and uncertain tenure of mens memories. The oldeſt books in the world, as well as the oldeſt in our religion, are the five books of Moſes. God himſelf (Exod. XXXI. 18.) wrote the ten commandments with his own finger upon two tables of ſtone, that is they were not the writing of Moſes or of any other inſtrument, but were his own immediate operation and production. He commanded Moſes alſo to write the words of the law and the tranſactions of the nation in a book, to preſerve the memory of them. After Amalek was defeated, the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, (Exod. XVII. 14.) "Write this for a me-"morial in a book, and rehearſe it in the ears of Joſhua." Again, after he had given ſeveral precepts, (Exod. XXXIV. 27.) "the Lord "ſaid unto Moſes, Write thou theſe words, for after the tenour of "theſe words I have made a covenant with thee and with Iſrael." He gave it moreover in charge, that in ſucceeding times when they ſhould have a king, the king (Deut. XVII. 18, 19.) "ſhould write him a "copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the prieſts "the levites; And it ſhall be with him, and he ſhall read therein all "the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to "keep all the words of this law and theſe ſtatutes to do them." The prophets too were often expreſly commanded to write down their viſions and prophecies; as particularly the prophet Iſaiah, (XXX. 8.) "Now "go write it before them in a table, and note it in a book, that it may "be for the time to come for ever and ever;" and likewiſe the prophet

phet Habakuk, (II. 2.) " Write the viſion, and make it plain upon " tables, that he may run that readeth it."

Our bleſſed Saviour indeed wrote nothing; for I ſuppoſe we ſhall hardly admit as genuin the letter to Abgarus king of Edeſſa in Syria, though preſerved by Euſebius. This Abgarus, as it is related, had heard of the fame of Chriſt's miracles, and laboring himſelf under a diſtemper in his feet, requeſted Jeſus by letter to come and cure him. Jeſus, though not then complying with his requeſt, yet wrote him an anſwer, making his excuſe for not coming, and at the ſame time promiſing after his aſcenſion to ſend one of his diſciples to him, who ſhould not only cure his preſent malady but give life to him and his. Theſe letters are preſerved, as I ſay, in the Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory of Euſebius, but are rejected as ſpurious by the beſt critics for ſeveral internal marks of forgery and other reaſons, and particularly becauſe none of the evangeliſts, nor any other writer of the three firſt centuries after Chriſt, make any mention of ſo remarkable a tranſaction. But however, though he wrote nothing himſelf, it was not long before the doctrin of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt was committed to writing. The firſt preachers of it were the penners of it. The apoſtles and the companions of the apoſtles wrote the Goſpels and Epiſtles; and theſe were publicly read in the Chriſtian aſſemblies or churches of thoſe days. I think it cannot be queſtioned, that they were moved to this good work, as well as aſſiſted in it, by the Holy Ghoſt. Our Saviour promiſed his diſciples, (John XIV. 26.) " The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghoſt, " whom the Father will ſend in my name, he ſhall teach you all things, " and bring all things to your remembrance whatſoever I have ſaid un- " to you:" and for what purpoſe more effectually than to record the hiſtory of his life and doctrin for the uſe and benefit of all ages? We are certain that St. John received a particular order to write the Revelation; (I. 19.) " Write the things which thou haſt ſeen, and the " things which are, and the things which ſhall be hereafter." In ſhort our religion is not left floting in mens memories, but is preſerved all in writing, there to be ſeen and read, to be known and underſtood by all men.

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It is true, whatever God commands is of equal force and authority, whether it be written or whether it be ſpoken; as for inſtance the ten commandments were alike obligatory, and it was as much a duty to attend, as much a duty to obey, when they were ſpoken by God from mount Sinai, as afterwards when they were written by him in two tables of ſtone. For the obligation to the thing ariſeth from the command of God, and not from the manner wherein that command is conveyed to us. The thing is never the more or the leſs ſacred and divine, becauſe it is written or ſpoken; but we receive it as ſacred and divine, becauſe it was written or ſpoken by God or thoſe who were commiſſioned by him. Every thing that is conveyed to poſterity, muſt neceſſarily be conveyed either by oral tradition or by ſome ſort of writing. But we ſee that it hath pleaſed almighty God, to make uſe of writing for the conveyance of his revelations both in the Jewiſh and in the Chriſtian diſpenſations. Infinite wiſdom would certainly chooſe that method of conveyance which is fitteſt and beſt: And that this method of conveyance is fitteſt and beſt we ſhall eaſily be convinced, if we conſider in the firſt place the uncertainty of oral tradition, and then the greater ſecurity and advantages of writing in general, and laſtly the particular reaſons for writing both the Old and New Teſtament. Our ſubject therefore is the uſefulneſs and expediency of the ſcripture as ſcripture.

I. This uſefulneſs, this expediency will appear, if we conſider, as I ſay, in the firſt place the uncertainty of oral tradition.

Oral tradition may poſſibly in ſome caſes and at ſome conjunctures be a ſufficient way of conveying a doctrin. It might be ſo in the firſt ages of the world, when the principles of religion were fewer, and the lives of men were longer, and families and nations were not ſo numerous, and ſo diffuſed and ſpread over the face of the earth, as they are at preſent. It might be ſo in our Saviour's life-time and for ſome ſhort time after, when the number of diſciples was but ſmall, and had no need of a written goſpel, having a living oracle to hear and conſult as long as our Saviour lived, and after he was dead the apoſtles were infallibly aſſiſted by the Holy Ghoſt, who (John XIV. 26.) " taught them

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" all things, and brought all things to their remembrance whatſoever " our Saviour had ſaid unto them." But not one of theſe circumſtances is now ſubſiſting. The ſcene is entirely changed. And now when revelation is ſo improved and inlarged, and the life of man is ſo ſhortened, and nations are ſo ſpread and multiplied; when the profeſſors of chriſtianity are ſo many, and inſpiration and miracles are ceaſed; now to pretend that ſuch a ſyſtem of doctrins, ſuch a body of laws, may be conveyed by word of mouth pure and entire from man to man, from nation to nation, from age to age, is too great a paradox, one would think, for the moſt paradoxical to maintain. Surely we are better acquainted with the defects and infirmities of human nature than to conceive this to be probable or even poſſible. If men had the ability, yet would they have the honeſty or integrity to do it without making any addition or diminution whatſoever? And are they generally ſo faithful and exact in their relations? Or rather do we not find that they uſe ſtories pretty much as Procruſtes did his gueſts, lop them ſhort or ſtretch them out to fit their ſize and purpoſe? It may be queſtioned therefore whether they would be willing to do it, if they were able; but alas, they are not able, if they were willing. The memory is ſo weak, and fancy and ſuperſtition are ſo ſtrong, that much of what is true and genuin will be forgotten on the one hand, and more of what is falſe and ſpurious will be added on the other. In time the whole truth will be totally loſt, or at leaſt totally obſcured: And tradition will be found like a river, that floweth ſmall and pure from the fountain-head, but by the mixture of other waters, falling into it in its courſe, loſeth its native clearneſs and purity, and the farther ſtill it runneth, the fouler and larger it groweth.

From the reaſon of the thing let us argue and appeal to fact and experience. Was ever any thing left only to tradition, and was not in time corrupted, if not utterly forgotten? If tradition could ever have preſerved any thing entire, one would imagin it ſhould with thoſe favorable circumſtances in the firſt ages of the world. This method of conveying a doctrin might then indeed have been ſufficient, but even then we ſee plainly that it was not effectual; for even before Abraham's time

time the truth was eclipſed by falſehood, the doctrin of the one true God was wonderfully corrupted, and polytheiſm and idolatry prevailed almoſt univerſally.

> " Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona
> " Multi." HOR.

There lived ſeveral heroes and brave men before the wars of Troy; but what memorials, what traces of them are to be found, without either poet to chant, or hiſtorian to record their praiſes? Are not their names and actions buried in oblivion, or turned into fable? And what indeed is the heathen theology for the moſt part, but ſacred truths metamorphoſed into fables by tradition? It is impoſſible to reckon up all the inſtances, where oral tradition hath failed; I believe it equally impoſſible to mention any one inſtance, where it hath ſucceeded. Where apoſtolical traditions have been moſt pretended, the tradition of one church hath been contrary to that of another church, the tradition of one age contrary to that of another age; as particularly in the doctrin of the millennaries, the communicating of infants, the rebaptizing of heretics, and the controverſy about the time of keeping Eaſter; in all which contraries have been confidently aſſerted and maintained, and yet both ſides have pretended equally to derive them from the apoſtles. Other inſtances might be produced, if theſe were not ſufficient to ſhow, that nothing certain can be built upon ſo weak and ſandy a foundation as tradition. A wiſe man would not leave any thing of conſequence to a thing ſo precarious, and would the wiſe God what is of the greateſt conſequence, a divine revelation? Let the words of men periſh as they will; but let the words of God, and of men inſpired by God, be preſerved for ever!

II. This is one argument of the uſefulneſs and expediency of the ſcripture, drawn from the uncertainty of oral tradition; but this uſefulneſs and expediency will farther appear, if we conſider, as was propoſed in the ſecond place, the greater ſecurity and advantages of writing in general.

It

It is certainly a more ſecure method of conveyance than tradition, being neither ſo liable to involuntary miſtakes through weakneſs of memory or underſtanding, nor ſo ſubject to voluntary falſifications, ſuppreſſions or additions, out of malice or deſign.

It is alſo a method of conveyance more natural and human. It is nothing extraordinary for a book to be tranſmitted pure and entire from generation to generation: but a traditionary doctrin, eſpecially if it be of any conſiderable length, cannot really be preſerved without a miracle, without the occaſional interpoſition of almighty God to renew the memory of it at proper intervals, or his continual aſſiſtance and inſpiration to keep it always alive and vigorous.

It is likewiſe a method of conveyance more complete and uniform, preſenting itſelf to all at once and to all alike to be laid and compared together; whereas a traditionary doctrin muſt be communicated by little and little, and without doubt communicated differently at different times by different perſons.

It is moreover a method of conveyance more general and diffuſive. A man's writings reach farther than his words; and ſurely we need not obſerve, that it is the practice of mankind, whenever they would publiſh any thing, to have it written or printed in a book.

Experience farther evinceth that it is a method of conveyance more laſting than tradition. It is an old and trite (1) obſervation, that a word heard periſheth, but a letter written remaineth. Our Saviour wrought many other miracles, did many other memorable things, beſides thoſe which were written, as St. John informs us; (XX. 30. XXI. 25.) but ſee how much more faithful record is than report, the few which were written are preſerved and believed, the many which were not written are utterly loſt and forgotten. Every thing of any conſequence we deſire to have in writing. By this laws are promulgated; by this arts and ſciences are propagated; by this titles and eſtates are ſecured. And what do we know of ancient hiſtory, but the little that cometh down to us in books and writings? Tradition paſſeth away like the morning cloud, but books may live as long as the ſun or moon endureth. That

(1) Vox audita perit, littera ſcripta manet.

may be ſaid of a written author, which the ſcripture ſaith of Abel, (Hebr. XI. 4.) " being dead he yet ſpeaketh." There is therefore the greateſt reaſon, as well as the ſtrongeſt paſſion, in that ardent wiſh of holy Job, (XIX. 23, 24.) " Oh that my words were now written, oh " that they were printed in a book; That they were graven with an " iron pen and lead, in the rock for ever!"

III. Theſe general arguments of the uncertainty of oral tradition and the greater ſecurity and advantages of writing are ſufficient to ſhow the uſefulneſs and expediency of the ſcripture; but as it was propoſed in the third and laſt place, there were more particular reaſons for writing both the Old and New Teſtament.

One reaſon for pitching upon this method might be that experience of the unſucceſsfulneſs of oral tradition in the firſt ages of the world. When Adam died, Methuſelah was above 200 years old; when Methuſelah died, Shem was near 100; when Shem died, Abraham was about 150; ſo that a tradition need paſs only through two hands from Adam to Abraham. And yet within this period, the tradition of the one true God was in a manner extinguiſhed, and the world was generally lapſed into polytheiſm and idolatry. The wiſdom of God therefore might not think it fitting to leave religion any longer to fallible tradition, but committed the Jewiſh law to writing. The prophets purſued the ſame method; and by this method the law and the prophets were preſerved in their original purity; ſo that our Saviour, though he charges the Jews freely with their other corruptions, yet never once accuſes them of corrupting the ſcripture. The apoſtles and evangeliſts had therefore a double reaſon to write their Epiſtles and Goſpels, having experience both of the uncertainty of tradition before the law, and of the greater ſecurity of writing under the law. And as (2) one very well obſerves, " It is the uſual method of the divine diſpenſations not " to go backwards, but to move towards perfection, and to proceed " from that which is leſs perfect to that which is more. And the apoſtle's " reaſoning concerning the two covenants is very applicable to theſe " two methods of conveying the doctrin of religion; (Hebr. VIII. 7.)

(2) Archbiſhop Tillotſon's Rule of Faith. Part 1. Sect. 4.

" If

" If the firſt had been faultleſs, then ſhould no place have been ſought " for the ſecond."

It is certainly more fair and open, freer from ſuſpicion of any fraud or contrivance, to have a religion preſerved in writing, there to be read and examined by all, than to have it left only with a few to be by them communicated in diſcourſe to others, no two men expreſſing the ſame thing juſt alike, nor even the ſame man at different times. The heathen philoſophers had their exoteric and eſoteric doctrins, as they diſtinguiſhed them, ſome which they generally delivered, and others which they communicated only to a few ſelect auditors; but the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity knew no ſuch diſtinction, they delivered the whole doctrin of God, as St. Paul profeſſed of himſelf, (Acts XX. 27.) " I " have not ſhunned to declare unto you all the counſel of God," and again (ver. 20.) " Ye know how I kept back nothing that was profi- " table unto you, but have ſhowed you and have taught you publicly " and from houſe to houſe." The heathen prieſts had their myſteries, which were to be concealed from the profane vulgar; but our religion can never be made too public. The more it is contemplated, the more it will be approved; and to profeſs it, you need only thoroughly to know it. It is ignorance, or ſomewhat worſe than ignorance, that induceth men to deny or deride it. It is frequently compared to *light*, and like the light it ſhineth to all mankind.

Moſt other religions too are committed to writing for the uſe of their profeſſors, and it would be a prejudice to the Chriſtian religion, if it enjoyed not the ſame advantage. The Jews had what they called an *oral* law as well as a *written* one, and the one as well as the other they pretended to have been given by God to Moſes on mount Sinai, the oral to ſerve as the comment or explanation of the written law. But in proceſs of time theſe traditions multiplied ſo faſt, that the Jews found it neceſſary to keep their traditions no longer as traditions, but committed them to writing; and they are now preſerved in the books called the Talmuds. So fallible is tradition, ſo much more ſecure is writing even in the opinion of the greateſt traditionifts: And if the doctrins of re-

ligion muſt one time or other be written, it is better ſurely to have them written by inſpired authors at firſt than by others afterwards.

The importance of the matter, the variety of the ſubjects, the deſign and intent of the Jewiſh and Chriſtian inſtitutions are farther arguments for writing both the Old and New Teſtament. The matter is of no leſs importance than the whole will of God and the ſalvation of mankind, our duty here and our happineſs hereafter; and if any thing deſerves to be written, do not theſe things in the moſt laſting characters? The ſubjects are likewiſe very various, hiſtories of times paſt and prophecies of things to come, orations and epiſtles, ſublime points of faith and plain rules of practice, hymns and prayers and thankſgivings, all too excellent to be forgotten, but too many all to be remembered. The Law was for a ſingle nation, but the Goſpel is for the whole world. For a ſingle nation it is requiſite that their laws ſhould be written, or to what can they appeal, and by what regulate their practice? And if it was neceſſary for the Law to be written, it was certainly much more neceſſary for the Goſpel, which was deſigned to be both of perpetual and univerſal obligation, a religion for all ages and for all nations.

Finally there are in the ſcriptures internal marks of their divinity, though perhaps not powerful enough to reclaim an infidel, yet ſufficient to confirm a believer. Let a good man diligently peruſe the ſcriptures, and he cannot but feel and own the truth of what is here aſſerted. His heart will kindle and glow within him. He will be ſo touched, raiſed, tranſported, as he never was by any human compoſitions. He will be ſenſible of the ſame effects as the diſciples were at Emmaus, when "they ſaid one to another (Luke XXIV. 32.) Did not our heart burn "within us, while he talked with us, and while he opened to us the "ſcriptures?" The words of God are like the works of God, monuments both of infinite wiſdom and goodneſs. The more you ſearch into them both, the more you diſcover of their divine author. You may ſearch into them both for ever, and there will ſtill be matter for farther reſearches. It was ſaid of our Saviour, (John VII. 46.) that "never

"man

" man ſpake like this man;" and it may be ſaid of the inſpired writers in general, that " never men wrote like theſe men."

An all-wiſe being muſt act upon infinitely better reaſons than any that we can poſſibly diſcover; but theſe are ſufficient to demonſtrate the uſefulneſs and expediency of the ſcriptures as ſcriptures, and at the ſame time to evince the unreaſonableneſs of thoſe men, who deny the people the uſe of the ſcriptures in the vulgar tongue, and (Mark VII. 13.) " make " the word of God of none effect by their tradition." Traditions, we ſee, are ſo far from being the rule of faith, that they can be no rule at all. For where are they? what are they? and how ſhall we know whether they are true or falſe? The apoſtle ſays expreſly (Rom. XV. 4.) that the ſcriptures " were written for our learning;" but theſe men, like the ſcribes and phariſees of old, (Luke XI. 52. Matt. XXIII. 13.) " take away the key of knowlege, and neither go in themſelves, neither " ſuffer them that are entring to go in." But this is manifeſtly to defeat the very end for which the ſcriptures were written; and is the higheſt inſolence and rebellion againſt almighty God, as well as the moſt horrid tyranny and cruelty to the ſouls of men. It is our peculiar happineſs, that " from children we may know the holy ſcriptures, " (2 Tim. III. 15.) which are able to make us wiſe unto ſalvation through " faith which is in Chriſt Jeſus." And let us admire and adore the wiſdom and goodneſs of God for thus fixing and ſecuring our religion, and not leaving it to the uncertain traditions of men. The reports and opinions of men will be various as men themſelves; but the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt, as well as Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, (Hebr. XIII. 8.) " is " the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever." And let us endevor for our parts to anſwer the end and deſign of the ſcriptures by the good uſe and improvement that we make of them. Be theſe our only oracles, the teſt and ſtandard of our religion; in theſe let us often read, often meditate; by theſe let us frame our opinions; by theſe let us regulate our lives. " For whatſoever things were written aforetime, " were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort " of the ſcriptures might have hope." And do thou, bleſſed Lord, who haſt cauſed all holy ſcriptures to be written for our learning, grant that

that we may in ſuch wiſe hear them, read, mark, learn and inwardly digeſt them, that by patience and comfort of thy holy word we may embrace and ever hold faſt the bleſſed hope of everlaſting life, which thou haſt given us in our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

DISSERTATION III.

On JOHN the BAPTIST.

BEFORE our bleſſed Saviour made his appearance in the world, it was thought proper to ſend a ſpecial meſſenger to prepare the way of the Lord: and this ſpecial meſſenger or forerunner was John the Baptiſt, whoſe ſingular character and extraordinary virtues merit our ſerious attention and conſideration. Our Saviour himſelf ſaith of him (Matt. XI. 9.) that he was "a prophet, and more than a prophet:" and ſoon afterwards (ver. 11.) he addeth with his uſual emphatic affirmation, "Verily I ſay unto you, Among them that are born of women, "there hath not riſen a greater than John the Baptiſt." A very high encomium this, but no higher than true. For certainly among all the prophets, there had not riſen a greater than he; as it is in the parallel place of St. Luke (VII. 28.) "Among thoſe that are born of women, "there is not a *greater prophet* than John the Baptiſt. Others foretold indeed the coming of the Meſſiah; he was the "angel or meſ-"ſenger to prepare the way before his face:" Others propheſied of the Meſſiah obſcurely and at a diſtance; he had the happineſs of ſeeing and ſhowing him to the people in perſon: Others were as lights ſhining in darkneſs, heralds to proclaim his glory but not to be eye-witneſſes

witneſſes of it; he was as it were the morning ſtar to uſher in the ſun of righteouſneſs; he had himſelf the honor of baptizing him, (Matt. III.) he ſaw the Holy Ghoſt deſcend upon him, and heard a voice from heaven declaring "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleaſed. "The law and the prophets propheſied until John;" (Matt. XI. 13.) his preaching was the firſt opening of the goſpel.

Indeed I conceive every perſon muſt be ſtruck more or leſs with the character of John the Baptiſt; there is ſomething extraordinary in all his ſayings, and in all his actions. And as it is one of the greateſt pleaſures to thinking minds to trace out the reaſons of the divine diſpenſations, I preſume it will not be an ungrateful taſk, if we inquire into the reaſons of this diſpenſation; and 1ſt in the general why it was proper to ſend a meſſenger to prepare the way before the Meſſiah; and 2dly in particular, if it was proper to ſend ſome meſſenger to prepare the way before him, yet why a meſſenger of ſo peculiar a turn and character, with ſuch ſingular marks and circumſtances. Theſe things happened not by chance, without deſign or contrivance. There is the moſt conſummate wiſdom (if we could but inveſtigate it) in every the leaſt part and circumſtance of the divine diſpenſations.

I. In the general, we are to inquire for what reaſons it was proper to ſend a meſſenger to prepare the way before the Meſſiah?

Any one may eaſily conceive this was done in honor of the Meſſiah, the better to diſtinguiſh his perſon, to add the greater dignity to his character, to give the greater ſanction to his authority, that the people knowing of his coming beforehand might be the more ready to receive and acknowlege him when he did come, and thence be led to revere and obey him accordingly. Princes have their heralds and harbingers to prepare their way before them, and ſurely this privilege was no leſs fitting and proper for the Son of God the king of Iſrael? Other enſigns and marks of royalty he had few or none, as being inconſiſtent with the part that he was to ſuſtain, with the life that he was to lead and the death that he was to die among men and for men: but this was perfectly conſiſtent with his life and character, and therefore it was the more neceſſary that he ſhould be diſtinguiſhed by this.

This

This was ſtill the more neceſſary, as the ſpirit of prophecy had been ſo long extinct among the Jews. For an interval of near 300 years had paſſed from the time of Malachi, the laſt prophet of the Jewiſh diſpenſation: And now it ſeemed expedient to awaken the attention of the nation, and to give notice of the coming of the true Meſſiah; I ſay, of the *true* Meſſiah among ſo many falſe ones as about that time appeared in the world. The Jews knew indeed there ſhould be ſuch a man; but ſtill ſome friendly hand was wanting to point out the very man: they had learned from their prophets, which was to be the tribe, and which was to be the family of the Meſſiah; but ſtill they were to learn (and it was a work worthy of ſome other prophet to teach them) which was to be the perſon.

And indeed at that time ſuch was the ſtate of the nation, that there was urgent occaſion for ſome preacher of righteouſneſs, bold as honeſt and honeſt as bold, to reprove the vices of all ranks and orders of men the higheſt as well as the loweſt, to awaken them if poſſible to a ſenſe of their danger and of their duty, to preſs upon them the neceſſity of immediate repentance and reformation, and ſo to prepare and diſpoſe their hearts for the reception of the Meſſiah. Great changes and revolutions in religions or governments are hardly to be brought about and accompliſhed all at once. The people muſt be weaned from old forms, and be prepared for new ones by ſteps and degrees. In like manner the light of the goſpel, like the light of the ſun, was not to break forth all at once, but to riſe gradually, and "ſhine more and more unto a "perfect day." Some culture was neceſſary before the good ſeed of the word could be ſown, or at leaſt before it could take root in the hearts of the people; and the preaching of John the Baptiſt was only preparatory to the more refined and heavenly doctrin of the bleſſed Jeſus.

Accordingly we may obſerve, that the ancient prophets propheſied of a meſſenger to prepare the way before the Meſſiah, and particularly Malachi and Iſaiah, as they are quoted by St. Mark in the beginning of his goſpel; (Mark I. 2, 3.) "Behold I ſend my meſſenger before thy "face, which ſhall prepare thy way before thee: The voice of one "crying

" crying in the wilderneſs, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his " paths ſtrait." This prophecy of Iſaiah is not only applied to John the Baptiſt by the evangeliſts, but he himſelf alſo confirms the application: for when prieſts and levites were ſent to him from Jeruſalem to aſk him Who he was, he anſwered (John I. 23.) " I am the voice of " one crying in the wilderneſs, Make ſtrait the way of the Lord." In like manner the prophecy of Malachi is not only applied to him by the evangeliſts, but the application is alſo ratified by our Saviour himſelf, (Matt. XI. 10.) " For this is He of whom it is written, Behold, I ſend " my meſſenger before thy face, which ſhall prepare thy way before " thee." Malachi hath another prophecy relating to John; (IV. 5, 6.) " Behold, I ſend you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great " and dreadful day of the Lord: And he ſhall turn the heart of the " fathers *to* the children, and the heart of the children *to* their fathers," that is he ſhall reconcile father and ſon though of different ſects and parties in religion; or otherwiſe " he ſhall turn the heart of the fa- " thers *with* the children, and the heart of the children *with* their fa- " thers;" that is he ſhall effect a thorough reformation, converting both old and young, parents and children, " leſt I come and ſmite the earth " with a curſe." The phraſe of *the great and dreadful day of the Lord*, refers to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the Jewiſh nation; but from hence ſome have conceived that John will alſo come to prepare the way before our Lord's coming to the general judgment. It may be ſo, or not: but our bleſſed Lord himſelf ſpeaketh of this prophecy as already fulfilled, (Matt. XVII. 12.) " But I ſay unto you, that " Elias *is come already*, and they knew him not, but they have done " unto him whatſoever they liſted." The angel Gabriel in his meſſage to Zacharias the father of John alludes to this prediction of Malachi, and to that of Iſaiah, and intimates the true interpretation and accompliſhment of both; (Luke I. 17.) " He ſhall go before him in the " ſpirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the " children, and the diſobedient to the wiſdom of the juſt, to make " ready a people prepared for the Lord." Becauſe the thing was fit

and proper to be done, therefore it was foretold; and again, becauſe it was foretold, therefore it was fit and proper to be done.

Thus it appears in the general, that it was proper to ſend a meſſenger to prepare the way before the Meſſiah; which was the firſt part of our inquiry.

II. The ſecond is more particular, If it was proper to ſend ſome meſſenger to prepare the way before him, yet why a meſſenger of ſo peculiar a turn and character, with ſuch ſingular marks and circumſtances? Now the particularities which principally offer themſelves to view are his miraculous birth, his manner of life and converſation, his manner of preaching and baptiſm, and his ſad but glorious death.

1. As to his birth, it was miraculous in almoſt all its circumſtances. (See Luke I.) His mother was barren, and both his parents were now well ſtricken in years: an angel was ſent to his father with the promiſe of ſuch a ſon, but the old man believed it not, and was ſtruck dumb for his infidelity: when his mother was gone with child about ſix months, ſhe was viſited by her couſin Mary the mother of our Lord, and it came to paſs the babe leaped in her womb for joy, and Elizabeth herſelf was filled with the Holy Ghoſt: after he was born and named John according to the direction of the angel, a name importing *grace* and *favor*, his father was immediately reſtored to his ſpeech and propheſied. Theſe are the moſt miraculous circumſtances attending his birth; and theſe, we may reaſonably conceive, were ſo diſpoſed to raiſe the expectation of mankind and to procure him the greater reverence and attention from them. "All they that heard theſe things," ſays the evangeliſt, (ver. 66.) "laid them up in their hearts, ſaying what manner of "child ſhall this be!" They muſt naturally conclude with themſelves, that his life would be ſomewhat more than ordinary whoſe birth was ſo very extraordinary; and if ever man was born a prophet, this was the man.

May we not farther conceive, that matters were thus ordered to derive honor ultimately upon the Meſſiah? The honor that is done to the ſervant terminates properly in the maſter; and if the forerunner and meſſen-

meſſenger was a perſon of ſuch dignity, what then muſt He be whoſe forerunner and meſſenger he was?

May we not yet farther conceive, that the miraculous birth of John was deſigned to prepare the way and to gain the eaſier belief for the ſtill more miraculous birth of the bleſſed Jeſus? Sure we are that the Angel maketh this uſe of it to the Virgin Mary, when ſhe doubted how ſhe could bear a ſon ſeeing ſhe knew not a man; (ver. 36, 37.) "And be-"hold thy couſin Elizabeth, ſhe hath alſo conceived a ſon in her old "age, and this is the ſixth month with her who was called barren; for "with God nothing ſhall be impoſſible." A leſſer miracle is a proper preparative for a greater; and whoever ſees and admits the former will be more eaſily reconciled to the belief of the latter.

2. As to his manner of life and converſation, he was reſerved and retired; he was ſtrict and abſtemious; ſevere to all but ſevereſt to himſelf; in dreſs and diet and every thing a copy of Elijah, but (give me leave to ſay) a copy far exceeding the original. "The ſame John had "his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins:" (Matt. III. 4.) and Elijah is deſcribed in like manner, (2 Kings I. 8.) as "an hairy man, and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins." It is farther ſaid of John that "his meat was locuſts and wild honey." *Wild honey*, we may ſuppoſe, was ſuch as was found in the holes of rocks and hollow trees, there being abundance of bees in Paleſtine. The word which is tranſlated *locuſts*, ſome conceive to ſignify the tops of plants reſembling aſparagus. But *locuſts* were allowed for food in the Levitical law; (Lev. XI. 22.) and it may be made appear from Pliny, Strabo, and ſeveral ancient authors, as well as from ſeveral modern travelers, that locuſts are a common food in the eaſtern and ſouthern parts of the world. Dr. Shaw in his obſervations on Barbary (1) ſays that "they are good to eat, and that ſprinkled with ſalt and fryed, "are in taſte not much unlike the river cray-fiſh."

As it was foretold in the general, that there ſhould be a meſſenger to go before the Meſſiah; ſo was it foretold in particular, that he ſhould be a meſſenger of ſuch a ſtamp and character. The Angel propheſied

(1) Shaw's Travels. Fol. p. 258.

of him before his conception; (Luke I. 15, 17.) "he ſhall drink nei-" ther wine nor ſtrong drink,—and he ſhall go before the Lord in the-" ſpirit and power of Elias." And ſome ages before it was the prediction of Malachi (IV. 5.) "Behold I will ſend you Elijah the pro-" phet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Not that Elijah was to come again in perſon, but only ſome prophet *in the ſpirit and power of Elijah*: As the Meſſiah is ſometimes by the prophets called David, becauſe in ſome things reſembling David; it being uſual to diſtinguiſh perſons who are like others, by the names of thoſe others whom they are like. So that we may eaſily reconcile that ſeeming contradiction in the goſpels, of our Saviour's affirming (Matt. XI. 14.) that John was the "Elias which was for to come," and John's denying "(John I. 21.) that he was Elias." John might very well deny that he was Elias, the *very perſon of Elias*, as ſome of the Jews apprehended him to be; and at the ſame time Chriſt might very well affirm that he was *the Elias which was for to come*, the perſon who was for to come *in the ſpirit and power of Elias*. His living ſo much in the wilderneſs, we may ſuppoſe, was for the better convenience of water to baptize ſuch numbers of people as daily reſorted to him: And without doubt his reſerved abſtemious manner of life was very proper and ſuitable to the character that he was to ſuſtain, of a preacher of repentance. Severity of doctrin requires ſeverity of life. He who would freely reprove others vices, muſt be guilty of none of his own. He who would effectually reform mankind, muſt not want to be reformed himſelf. It is a ſort of a contradiction for a preacher of repentance to be (Luke VII. 25.) "cloathed in ſoft raiment and to" live delicately." His practice and his preaching would not be of a piece; the one would defeat the intent of the other, as mens actions are ever of more weight and influence than their ſpeeches or ſayings.

But there ſeemeth to have been yet a farther reaſon for this remarkable ſtrictneſs and ſeverity of life. A contraſt appears evidently to have been deſigned between the two characters; Jeſus to be of the ſocial turn, John to be of the ſolitary; Jeſus to live in cities and frequent public places, John to ſpend moſt of his time in the wilderneſs; Jeſus

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to be free and generous, John to be rigid and auſtere; Jeſus to *come eating and drinking*, John to *come neither eating nor drinking*; that perſons of the moſt different complexions and tempers, of the moſt contrary humors and habits, might be engaged either by the one or by the other; and that the Jews were not thus engaged was a greater aggravation of their infidelity, and our Saviour himſelf ſeverely reproves them for it (Matt. XI. 16, &c.) "Whereunto ſhall I liken this "generation? It is like unto children ſitting in the markets, and call-"ing unto their fellows, and ſaying, We have piped unto ye and ye "have not danced, We have mourned unto ye, and ye have not la-"mented; For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they ſay "He hath a devil; The Son of man came eating and drinking, and "they ſay Behold a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of "publicans and ſinners; But wiſdom is juſtified of her children:" each of theſe ſacred perſons had his juſt reaſons for acting in this manner, and both equally manifeſt the wiſdom of the divine diſpenſations.

3. As to his manner of preaching and baptiſm, we may obſerve that he never confirmed his doctrin by any miracle. "John did no mi-"racle," it is ſaid expreſly in the goſpel (John X. 41.) for that honor was reſerved for the Meſſiah. As it was, many of the Jews were inclined to think him the Meſſiah; but doubtleſs the miſtake would have ſpread wider and have prevailed farther, if to his other excellent qualifications had been added the power of working miracles.

We may obſerve too, that in all his doctrin he never once recommends his own recluſe manner of life for a pattern to others. When the people, the publicans and the ſoldiers (ſee Luke III.) came to him, and aſked him what they ſhould do; He preſſed upon them the duties of their ſeveral ſtations and callings, ſo far was he from adviſing or encouraging any to retire into a deſert or a cloiſter. And indeed the life of Monks and Hermits is not properly the life of Chriſtians; for (Matt. V. 15, 16.) we are not to "put our candle under a buſhel," but are "to let our light ſhine before men, that they ſeeing our good works "may glorify our Father which is in heaven."

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The ſum and ſubſtance of John's doctrin, as it is expreſſed by the evangeliſts (Luke III. 4.) was " preaching the baptiſm of repentance " for the remiſſion of ſins." The doctrin of repentance is neceſſary for all perſons, but perhaps for thoſe moſt who think they ſtand leaſt in need of it, as the Phariſees and Sadducces, whom therefore the Baptiſt doth not ſpare out of reverence to their dignity and high ſtations, but reprehends with greater ſeverity than the people or publicans or ſoldiers: (Matt. III. 7, 8.) " O generation of vipers who hath warned you to flee " from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for re- " pentance." The doctrin of repentance is ſeaſonable at all times as well as for all perſons, but was more particularly ſeaſonable at that time, to fit and prepare men's hearts, when the goſpel was to be publiſhed, when the kingdom of heaven was at hand. The proſelytes to this doctrin he admitted, as the Jews admitted the proſelytes to their religion, by baptiſm; which he uſed not as a bare ceremony but as a ceremony of an apt ſignification, the cleanſing of the body intimating the cleanſing and purifying of the ſoul. And from the great numbers which he baptized, he obtained the name of the *Baptiſt*; but not only from baptizing theſe but likewiſe from having the honor of baptizing the Son of God. Not that Jeſus ſtood in need of his baptiſm, or could be more pure with it than without it; but he ſubmitted to it as to a divine ordinance and appointment; for (Luke III. 15.) " thus it became him " to fulfil all righteouſneſs."

4. As to the Baptiſt's ſad but glorious death, we know that he was committed to priſon for reproving Herod for living with his brother Philip's wife, (Matt. XIV. 4.) " for John ſaid unto him it is not lawful " for thee to have her." This Herod was (2) Herod Antipas, ſon of Herod the great, and tetrarch of Galilee. This brother Philip was not Philip tetrarch of Iturea, but the younger Philip or Herod Philip, another ſon of Herod the great: and his wife's name was Herodias, who was the daughter of Ariſtobulus, another ſon of Herod the great; ſo that ſhe was niece to her huſband, and had by him a daughter called Salome. Herod and Philip being brothers by the ſame father, Herod

(2) See Joſeph. Antiq. Lib. 18.

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was likewiſe uncle to Herodias; and having conceived an unlawful paſſion for her, he obtained from her a promiſe to leave her huſband who was a private perſon, and to come and partake with him of the pleaſures of a crown, upon his promiſing to marry her, and for this purpoſe to put away his preſent wife the daughter of Aretas king of Arabia. As they had promiſed, ſo they performed; and lived together in inceſt and adultery. Herod had ſhown great regard for John, (Mark VI. 20.) "and obſerved him; and when he heard him, he did many things, "and heard him gladly:" but yet neither Herod's friendſhip nor his power could hinder John from reproving him for this criminal conduct, (Luke III. 19.) "and for all the evils which Herod had done:" and for this honeſt freedom of ſpeech and faithful diſcharge of his duty he was committed to priſon. Herodias had a greater reſentment and (Mark VI. 19, 20.) "quarrel againſt him, and would have killed him, "but ſhe could not: For Herod feared John, knowing that he was a "juſt man and an holy;" and (Matt. XIV. 5.) "he feared" alſo "the "multitude, becauſe they counted John as a prophet:" ſo that for the preſent he was only detained in priſon.

During his confinement he ſent two of his diſciples to Jeſus with this meſſage, (Matt. XI. 3.) "Art thou he that ſhould come or do we "look for another?" Art thou the promiſed Meſſiah, or are we ſtill to expect him? Not that He himſelf could poſſibly entertain the leaſt doubt or ſcruple of it, after he had (See John I. and Matt. III.) ſo often declared Jeſus to be the Meſſiah, "the Son of God, the lamb of "God which taketh away the ſin of the world," and after he had ſeen the heavens open and the Holy Ghoſt deſcend upon him, and heard a voice from heaven ſaying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am "well pleaſed." If John had entertained any doubt or ſcruple of this kind, it muſt have ariſen from ſome dejection of ſpirit for his long impriſonment and Jeſus doing nothing for his deliverance. But it appears by that repeated declaration of John's, "Behold the lamb of God "which taketh away the ſin of the world," that he expected Jeſus not as a temporal prince and deliverer, but as a ſuffering and dying Saviour: and neither would Jeſus have given, nor would John have de-

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ſerved, if he had really doubted, the commendations at that very time beſtowed upon him, (Matt. XI. 9, 10, 11.) "A prophet, and more "than a prophet. For this is He of whom it is written, Behold I ſend "my meſſenger before thy face, which ſhall prepare thy way before "thee. Verily I ſay unto you, Among them that are born of women "there hath not riſen a greater than John the Baptiſt." We may be certain therefore that he ſent his diſciples upon this errand, not for his own ſatisfaction but for theirs, to convince them that he had ſaid no more of Jeſus than was true, to comfort them now he was in danger of being taken from them, and to let them ſee there was a greater and better maſter for them, when he himſelf ſhould be no more?

The circumſtances of his death are too well known to be related. They afford flagrant and melancholy proofs of a vicious woman's implacable revenge, of a vow raſhly made but more raſhly performed, of the cruelty of the wicked even in their mirth and feſtivity: and what advantages did Herod and Herodias obtain by all their cruelty and wickedneſs? Herod was of the ſect of the Sadducees, as we may collect from St. Matthew and St. Mark compared together; for what is thus expreſſed by St. Matthew, (XVI. 6.) "Take heed and beware of the "leaven of the Phariſees and of the Sadducees," the ſame is thus expreſſed by St. Mark, (VIII. 15.) "Take heed, beware of the leaven "of the Phariſees and of the leaven of Herod:" but the greateſt infidels are always the moſt ſuperſtitious; and Herod no ſooner heard of the fame and miracles of Jeſus, than his conſcience ſmote him, (Mark VI. 14.) "that John the Baptiſt was riſen from the dead, and "therefore mighty works do ſhow forth themſelves in him." His guilty mind haunted him, if nothing elſe did. Herod's former wife, whom he had put away (3), had recourſe to her father to revenge her wrongs, which was the firſt occaſion of the war between them, wherein Aretas gained a complete victory, and routed and deſtroyed Herod's army. At length Herod and Herodias were ſtript of their wealth and power by order of the Roman emperor Caligula, and were condemned to end their days in exile at Lyons in France. Such was the fate of the

(3) See Joſeph. Antiq. Lib. 18. Cap. 6. & 8.

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contrivers and authors of the death of John the Baptiſt. Of the daughter it is alſo related by Whitby from Nicephorus, "that ſhe going over "the ice in winter, the ice brake, and ſhe ſlipt in to the head, which "at laſt was ſevered from her body by the ſharpneſs of the ice; Idque "non ſine Dei numine, God requiring her head for that of the Baptiſt's, "which if true was a wonderful providence."

But on the other hand his death exhibits a moſt heroic inſtance of a man ſuffering for arraigning the vices of a court: And as it is natural for mankind to take the part of perſecuted virtue, this muſt needs endear him to the people, and gain him the greater veneration among them, and the greater veneration they had for John, the greater they would have for Jeſus, for the ſake of John's teſtimony. His death was ſo reſented, and his memory was ſo reverenced among them, that even Joſephus the Jewiſh Hiſtorian informs us, that upon the defeat of Herod's army by Aretas king of the Arabians, the Jews aſcribed it to the juſt judgment of God for Herod's having put John the Baptiſt to death; who, ſays the (4) Hiſtorian, was a good man, and exhorted the Jews that exerciſing virtue and practiſing juſtice towards one another and piety towards God they ſhould come to his baptiſm. That which was ſaid of the law, may alſo be ſaid of John, that he was (Gal. III. 24.) "their "ſchool-maſter to bring them unto Chriſt:" And in fact we find, the number of our Saviour's diſciples conſiderably increaſed after the death of the Baptiſt. The diſciples of John, after they had performed the laſt duties to their maſter in burying him, "went to Jeſus," (Matt. XIV. 12.) and became his diſciples: And "his name was ſpread abroad," ſaith St. Mark, (VI. 14.) that is, more generally ſpread abroad than it was before.—So wonderfully doth God diſpoſe and order all events to anſwer the ends and deſigns of his providence; and in whatever view we conſider the Baptiſt, whether in his birth or in his death, whether in his life or in his doctrin God is glorified in all.

If we ſhould now put to ourſelves our Saviour's queſtion, (Matt. XXI. 25.) "The baptiſm of John, whence was it? from heaven or of men?" I ſuppoſe we ſhould anſwer without heſitation, *From heaven.* The

(4) Joſeph. Antiq. Lib. 18. cap. 6. Vol. 2. p. 805. Edit. Hudſon.

of John to Jeſus, and the teſtimony of Jeſus to John mutually confirm the divine commiſſion of both. And yet as far as it appears, they ſeldom converſed together, they had little intercourſe the one with the other: and all circumſtances conſidered, it was utterly impoſſible, that there ſhould have been any concerted fraud or colluſion between them. As the character and office and perſon of the Baptiſt were pointed out by the prophets, ſo he was himſelf indued with the ſpirit of prophecy. For without divine inſpiration he could not have known or declared a truth, ſo contrary to all the expectations of the Jews, (John I. 29.) "Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the ſin of the world." Without divine inſpiration he could not have foreſeen and foretold the manner of the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt on the day of Pentecoſt, (Luke III. 16.) "I indeed baptize you with water, but he ſhall bap-"tize you with the Holy Ghoſt and with fire." But notwithſtanding the great advantages which John enjoyed, yet (Matt. XI. 11.) "he "that is leaſt in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." Every Chriſtian comprehends more evangelical truths than were revealed to John. John was the herald to proclaim the kingdom of heaven at hand, but every Chriſtian is a member of it. What John only expected or could only expect, that every Chriſtian hath ſeen fulfilled. The prophets were as ſtars of the night; John, as I ſaid before, was as the ſtar of the morning; but every Chriſtian liveth as I may ſay in open day, in the full light of the ſun of righteouſneſs. "Verily I ſay "unto you, Among them that are born of women, there hath not "riſen a greater than John the Baptiſt: notwithſtanding he that is "leaſt in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

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On our SAVIOUR's INCARNATION.

"WITHOUT controverſy, ſays St. Paul, (1 Tim. III. 16.) great "is the myſtery of godlineſs; God manifeſted in the fleſh." A wonderful myſtery indeed, that He who was (Heb. I. 3.) "the "brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon;" that He (John I. 1.) who "was in the beginning and was with God "and was God," ſhould (Phil. II. 7.) "make himſelf of no reputa- "tion, and take upon him the form of a ſervant and be made in the like- "neſs of men;" ſhould be (Gal. IV. 4.) "made fleſh, made of a "woman, made under the law and dwell among us!" But though he was pleaſed to aſſume the man, yet he laid not aſide the God; the divine and human natures were both united in him, ſo as to make but one perſon. As man he was the "ſon of David," (Matt. XXII. 45.) as God he was the "Lord of David:" as man he was "upon earth," (John III. 13.) as God he was "in heaven" while upon earth: in his human nature he "increaſed in wiſdom and ſtature," (Luke II. 52.) in his divine nature he knew all things and filled all things: in his human nature he could ſay (John XVII. 11.) "Now I am no more in "the world," in his divine nature he could alſo ſay (Matt. XXVIII. 20.) "Lo, I am with you alway even unto the end of the world:" in the one he ſuffered, in the other he was impaſſible and "bleſſed for ever." Indeed how the divine and human natures were united in him, and ſo made but one perſon, we can by no means comprehend; but neither can we comprehend, how the ſoul and the body are united in a man and ſo make but one perſon: And our ignorance is no more an objection againſt the truth of the thing in one caſe than the other. (Eccleſ. XI. 5.) "As thou knoweſt not what is the way of the ſpirit, nor how the

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" bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child, even ſo thou " knoweſt not the works of God that maketh all." We cannot give an account how children are born in the natural way; and what wonder is it then, that we are not able to account for the miraculous birth of the Son of God?

The Incarnation of the Son of God being ſo great a myſtery, it will become us rather ſilently to adore it than curiouſly to inquire into the manner of it. But ſtill there are other inquiries relating to the incarnation, wherein I conceive every Chriſtian would willingly be ſatisfied, and perhaps may be ſatisfied; as particularly Why was the Son of God incarnate and made man? For though we cannot conceive the mode and manner of his incarnation, yet perhaps we may be able to trace out ſome of the ends and reaſons of it; though we cannot comprehend how it was done, yet perhaps we may in ſome meaſure why it was done. Our philoſophy, to ſpeak in the language of the logicians, extendeth more to the final than to the formal cauſes of things. The mode and manner of God's operations we know in nothing; but we may diſcern ſome ends and uſes in almoſt every thing. And ſuch an extraordinary ſtep as the Incarnation of the Son of God, we may be certain, would not have been taken but upon the beſt grounds and reaſons. Some of theſe reaſons, ſhort-ſighted as we are, we may perhaps be able to diſcover. It cannot miſbecome us to ſearch and inquire into them, provided we do it with that modeſty and deference which are due from the creature to the Creator, and ſteer our reaſon all along by the compaſs of revelation.

For what reaſons therefore may we conceive that the Son of God was incarnate and made man? Such an inquiry will be the more proper, the more ſeaſonable; becauſe, in an age that queſtions every thing, this article of our faith hath been particularly queſtioned; and many have been tempted to doubt of the truth and reality of the thing, becauſe they were not fully ſatisfied of the fitneſs and expediency of it. What neceſſity was there, ſay they, for ſo ſuperlative a miracle? Could not God have ſaved the world without ſo much circumſtance and condeſcenſion?

ſcenſion? (Pſal. VIII. 4.) "What is man that he ſhould be ſo mindful "of him, and the ſon of man that he ſhould ſo viſit him?"

1. "Nay but O man who art thou that replieſt againſt God? (Rom. "IX. 20.) ſhall the thing *ſaved* ſay to him that *ſaved* it, why haſt thou "*redeemed* me thus?" Surely we ought to be thankful for ſalvation upon any terms, and not frowardly reject it, becauſe perhaps we cannot perfectly comprehend the manner in which it is conveyed to us. God's doing it in this manner may ſatisfy us that this is the beſt manner of doing it; and certainly ſo extraordinary a remedy would not have been applied, unleſs the caſe had been as extraordinary and required it. The great God does nothing but with infinite wiſdom. There may be many reaſons which we can diſcover; there may be numberleſs which we cannot; as particularly how can we know what was tranſacted and agreed between the Father and the Son upon the fall of man, or even before the creation of the world? This only we may ſay in the general, that as the Son of God created the world, ſo he ſeemeth to have been moſt fit and able to redeem it. (John I. 3.) "All "things were made by him and without him was not any thing made "that was made;" and therefore he ſeemeth the proper perſon to recover and reſtore his own creation.

2. Nor was the notion of a God incarnate ſo ſtrange a notion, or ſo contrary to the general apprehenſions of mankind, as we may at firſt imagin. The Heathens believed it no very uncommon thing for the gods to deſcend in human ſhape and to have intercourſe with men. Such was their theology, and we have a particular inſtance in the Acts of the Apoſtles. For when Paul and Barnabas were at Lyſtra, and healed there the man who had been a cripple from his mother's womb, the people cried out (Acts XIV. 11.) "the gods are come down to us in the likeneſs of "men," and were for doing ſacrifice unto them. The Jews were ſtill more prepared for ſuch a diſpenſation. There were frequent intimations in their prophets, that their Meſſiah ſhould be a *divine perſon*. "Behold," ſaith the prophet Iſaiah (VII. 14.) "a virgin ſhall conceive, and bear a "ſon, and ſhall call his name Immanuel," that is *God with us*. Again, "Unto us," ſaith the ſame prophet, (IX. 16.) "a child is born, unto

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" us a ſon is given, and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulder, " and He ſhall be called wonderful, counſellor, the mighty God, the " everlaſting father, or *the father of the future age*, the prince of " peace." The notion therefore of a God incarnate was in ſome meaſure familiarized to the apprehenſions of mankind; neither could the Jew nor the Gentile for this reaſon object to the Chriſtian religion, becauſe thus far it was agreeable to the principles of their own religion.

3. Thoſe who for this reaſon do object to the Chriſtian religion, I would willingly know what they in their great wiſdom would have had done? The world was ſunk in idolatry and wickedneſs, and what method could have been taken to raiſe and reform it, that had not been taken already? Firſt an oral, and afterwards a written law had been given, but without effect; preachers and prophets had been ſent one after another, but to little purpoſe; nay angels had been employed; nay God himſelf had ſpoken from heaven, (Hebr. XII. 19, 21.) " which voice they that heard intreated that the word ſhould not be " ſpoken to them any more; and ſo terrible was the ſight that Moſes " ſaid I exceedingly fear and quake." The beſt expedient therefore, that remained, ſeemeth to have been the incarnation of the Son of God; at leaſt we ſhould not preſume to cenſure this diſpenſation, unleſs we could point out ſome other and better.

4. This diſpenſation hath all the advantages of the former diſpenſations, and at the ſame time is liable to none of their inconveniences. Mere man was too much upon a level with ourſelves. The great God was too awful and majeſtic; but in the divine and human natures united there would be a proper mixture of light and ſhade. We might bear the Deity under the veil of humanity, as we can look upon the ſun through a cloud. The " Word made fleſh" could ſpeak at once with all of humility and all of majeſty; as man he could condeſcend, as God he could command; his inſtructions would be the moſt familiar as he was the Son of man, and at the ſame time the moſt authoritative as he was the Son of God; (Hebr. II. 2, 3.) " for if the word ſpoken " by

(1) Quotus enim quiſque philoſophorum invenitur—qui diſciplinam ſuam non oſtentationem ſcientiæ

" by angels was ſtedfaſt, and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience re-
" ceived a juſt recompenſe of reward, how ſhall we eſcape if we ne-
" glect ſo great ſalvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the
" Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?"

5. He could alſo make virtue familiar to us not only by his preaching and doctrin, but likewiſe by his life and converſation; he could not only inſtruct us in our duty by his precepts, but (what is of greater uſe) animate us by his example, and ſhow that he required nothing more of others as God than what he practiſed himſelf as man. It was ſaid of Socrates, the great teacher of morality among the Heathens, that he brought philoſophy down from heaven; but it may with greater truth and juſtice be ſaid of Chriſt, that he brought not only philoſophy but divinity down from heaven to dwell among men. He not only taught, but lived up to it. His doctrin was the beſt ſyſtem of morality, and his life the completeſt comment upon it. It was a great objection to the philoſophers (1), that they did not make their philoſophy the law and rule of their actions, but only an oſtentation of their learning and knowlege; that they themſelves did not obey themſelves, but lived in perpetual contradiction to their own precepts. And even among the prophets and inſpired writers there were frailties and ſpots in the moſt ſhining characters. Several of them might be good men, but ſtill they were but men, and far from perfection. But in Jeſus we have the teſt and ſtandard of holineſs in life as well as in doctrin; an example ever to be imitated and never to be equalled. He was guilty of "no ſin (1 Pet. II. 2.) neither was guile found in his mouth." As "never man ſpake" as he ſpake, (John VII. 46.) ſo never man lived as he lived.

6. Beſides his being thus our teacher and our pattern, it ſeemeth reaſonable that ſatisfaction ſhould be made in our nature, as in our nature the debt had been contracted; that man ſhould ſuffer, as man had offended; that the obedience of man ſhould be our juſtification, as the tranſgreſſion of man had been our condemnation. And this is what

entiæ ſed legem vitæ putet? qui obtemperet ipſe ſibi, & decretis ſuis pareat?—ut cum eorum vita mirabiliter pugnet oratio. Cicero. Tuſc. Diſp. L. 2. c. 4.

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the Apoſtle intimates (Rom. V. 19.) " For as by one man's diſobe-
" dience many were made ſinners, ſo by the obedience of one ſhall
" many be made righteous."

7. And then as he was the Son of man he could offer up himſelf a ſacrifice, and as he was the Son of God he could make that ſacrifice acceptable: As he was the Son of God he could give us aſſurance of a reſurrection, and as he was the Son of man there could be a firſt proof and inſtance of it in himſelf.

8. And then he could be a merciful and faithful high-prieſt and mediator between God and man; for as the author to the Hebrews ſpeaketh on this occaſion (Hebr. II. 17.) " In all things it behoved him to be
" made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faith-
" ful high-prieſt in things pertaining to God to make reconciliation for
" the ſins of the people." And indeed whom could we rather deſire for our high-prieſt and mediator, than one who is ſo ſenſible of our wants, and ſo willing and able to redreſs them? (2) Having been a man himſelf he thinketh nothing of man's alien from him; having been " tempted in all points like as we are yet without ſin," (Hebr. IV. 15.) he is " touched with the feeling of our infirmities; and (II. 18.)
" in that he himſelf hath ſuffered being tempted, he is able to ſuccour
" them that are tempted."

9. And then having authority as God, and being viſible as man, he could be a proper perſon to judge the world, and in a word to tranſact all matters between God and man, being himſelf both God and man.

10. We cannot indeed pretend to aſſert that God could not have ſaved the world by any other method than by the incarnation of his Son; " For (Rom. XI. 34.) who hath known the mind of the Lord,
" or who hath been his counſellor?" Who can fathom the depths of omniſcience, or circumſcribe the bounds of omnipotence, and ſay " Hitherto canſt thou come and no farther?" We cannot therefore pretend to aſſert, that God could not have ſaved the world by any other method: But what other method could have been contrived with more of love to ſinners and more of hatred to ſin; ſo as to pardon the

(2) Homo ſum, humani nihil a me alienum puto. Terence.

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breach of the divine laws, and yet at the ſame time to vindicate their authority; ſo as to ſatisfy offended juſtice agreeably to mercy, and ſo as to diſplay infinite mercy agreeably to juſtice? That God ſhould give his only Son to become man and to die for us rather than that we ſhould periſh for ever is ſurely an amazing inſtance of mercy; but yet that he ſhould not accept of any leſſer ſatisfaction for the ſin of man than the incarnation and death of his only Son is ſurely as amazing an inſtance of juſtice. And ſhall we admire moſt the one or the other? moſt revere the juſtice or moſt adore the goodneſs? In this diſpenſation, as the Pſalmiſt elegantly expreſſeth it, (LXXXV. 10.) "mercy "and truth are met together, righteouſneſs and peace have kiſſed "each other."

11. What other method could have taught us better the dignity of human nature and the value that we therefore ought to ſet upon ourſelves? Men uſually value themſelves upon any great alliance of blood or affinity; but what alliance, what relation can be more honorable than that the Son of God ſhould condeſcend to take our nature upon him, and become man to exalt us alſo to be the children of God? "I "have ſaid to corruption," ſays holy Job, (XVII. 14.) "thou art my "father, to the worm thou art my mother and ſiſter:" but now the good Chriſtian may ſay to God thou art my father, and to Chriſt thou art my brother. We ſhould only live worthy of this relation. Our Saviour hath dignified our nature by aſſuming it, and we ſhould not by our ſins and impurities debaſe it. We ſhould conſider how nearly we are related to him, (Eph. V. 30.) "for we are members of his "body, of his fleſh, and of his bones."

12. What other method could have been fitter to engage our faith and hope and confidence in God; and what may we not expect from him who hath done ſo many and ſo great things for us already? (Rom. VIII. 32.) "For he that ſpared not his own Son but delivered him "up for us all, how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all "things?"

13. What other method could have been more effectual to make us love God and love one another? For, as St. John argues, (1 John IV. 19.) "we love him becauſe he firſt loved us;" ſuch an amazing inſtance of love deſerves a return of love: and (ver. 11.) "if God ſo "loved us, we ought alſo to love one another;" if God forgives us our "ten thouſand talents," we ſurely ought to forgive one another our "hundred pence."

14. In ſhort what other method could have ſhown us better the neceſſity of a life of virtue, and the malignity of a life of ſin? or have laid upon us ſtronger obligations to love and purſue the one, to hate and avoid the other? For (1 John III. 8.) "for this purpoſe was the Son "of God manifeſted to deſtroy the works of the devil." Every Chriſtian therefore, who leadeth a wicked life, defeats as much as in him lieth the very end and deſign of our Saviour's coming into the world; and it would be better for him not only that Chriſt had never been born, but that he himſelf had never been born too.

Such ſeem to have been the ends and reaſons of the Incarnation of the Son of God; but I have rather hinted at them than explained them, for each particular almoſt might be drawn out into a ſeparate diſcourſe. But after all who can fully underſtand the counſels of the Almighty? (1 Cor. II. 11.) "As no man knoweth the things of a "man, ſave the ſpirit of man which is in him; even ſo the things of "God (theſe deep things of God eſpecially) none knoweth but the "Spirit of God. This is a myſtery that even "the angels (1 Pet. I. "12.) deſire to look into;" and no wonder then that with our narrow underſtandings we cannot perfectly comprehend it. We may ſay many things, but yet we can never ſay enough; we may diſcover many ends and reaſons, but yet there are many more to be diſcovered, and the diſcovery of them will probably make a part of the happineſs of contemplative ſpirits in the world to come.

What heart can worthily conceive it, what tongue can utter it! In this diſpenſation wiſdom and power, juſtice and mercy, greatneſs and humility are all united. The more we think of it, ſtill the more we find to think, whether we conſider the manner how it was done or the

reaſons

reaſons why it was done, the perſon by whom, or thoſe for whoſe ſake it was undertaken. Every way it is full of wonders: and ſhall we admire moſt, God for ſending his only Son, or the Son of God for being ſent; the one for freely accepting this ranſome, or the other for freely offering it? " O the breadth and length and depth and highth of the " love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowlege," as the Apoſtle (Eph. III. 18, 19.) expreſſeth it.

" What ſhall we render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards us? " (Pſal. CXVI. 12. and CIII. 1, &c.) Shall not our ſouls bleſs the " Lord, and all that is within us bleſs his holy name, who thus for- " giveth all our iniquities, and healeth all our diſeaſes; who thus re- " deemeth our lives from deſtruction, and crowneth us with loving " kindneſs and tender mercies?" We ſhould render unto God not only the tribute of our thanks and praiſe, but (what is more material) of our hearts and lives. For (1 John V. 3.) " this is the love of God that " we keep his commandments;" this is the beſt return of love that we can make for his ineſtimable love to us, and indeed without this all our moſt ſolemn profeſſions will be vain and to no purpoſe. Our faith will be no faith, our thankſgiving will be no thankſgiving, but rather an inſult and mockery of God; if while we profeſs Chriſt with our lips, we yet deny him in our lives; if while we celebrate his nativity in words, we yet crucifie him afreſh by our actions.

But can ſuch diſingenuity be found among Chriſtians? Is human nature capable of ſuch monſtrous ingratitude? We were " not worthy O " Lord that thou ſhouldſt come under our roof;" (Matt. VIII. 8.) and what then were we that thou ſhouldſt take our nature upon thee, and for our ſakes live in poverty and die in agony? and will not ſuch ſtupendous inſtances of love conſtrain all ingenuous natures to make a ſuitable return? (John VI. 68, 69.) " Lord to whom ſhall we go? thou " haſt the words of eternal life; and we believe and are ſure that thou " art the Chriſt, the Son of the living God." We will therefore ſtudy thy bleſſed will, obey thy precepts, imitate thy example, and ſo endevor to anſwer the deſign of thy firſt coming in the fleſh, that we may not be afraid of thy ſecond coming to judgment; but that as thy firſt

coming was " to put away ſin by the ſacrifice of thyſelf," (Hebr. IX. 26, 28.) ſo thy ſecond coming may be unto us who " look for thee " without ſin, unto ſalvation." (Rev. XXII. 20.) " Amen, Even ſo " come Lord Jeſus."

DISSERTATION V.

On our SAVIOUR's NATIVITY.

IF we take a ſurvey of the natural world, we ſhall find not only the whole, but alſo the ſeveral parts of it conſtituted and adjuſted in wonderful order, harmony, and proportion. We may compare it to a complete complicated machine, of which not only the main ſprings and movements are admirably fitted and adapted each to other, but likewiſe all the leſſer wheels and dependent motions have their uſe and beauty, and ſhow the moſt exquiſite ſkill and contrivance. The Pſalmiſt might very well ſay, (CIV. 24.) " O Lord how manifold are thy " works! in wiſdom haſt thou made them all;" the leaſt as well as the greateſt, all in number weight and meaſure. And the more accurately we view and review them, we ſhall not like the works of art admire them leſs but more. The greateſt art is in nature, for nature is the art of God.

As the works of nature are wonderful, ſo likewiſe are thoſe of grace: As there is the greateſt wiſdom in the creation, ſo likewiſe in the redemption of the world. This great tranſaction is not only admirable and adoreable in itſelf and for itſelf; but infinite wiſdom is alſo to be ſeen in the ſeveral ſteps, in the ſeveral parts and circumſtances of it. The manner and circumſtances of doing a thing greatly add to the doing it; and as God doeth every thing that is moſt proper, ſo he doeth

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it likewiſe in the moſt proper manner. " Not even a ſparrow falleth " to the ground without our heavenly father;" (Matt. X. 29.) Not even an incident ſeemingly the moſt indifferent is without ſome gracious end and deſign. And the more we conſider and the better we underſtand the methods and diſpenſations of providence, we ſhall not think the leſs highly of them (as we do generally of the deſigns of men after we ſee through them) but ſhall have the greater reaſon to reverence and adore the great author and diſpoſer of all things. " The works of the " Lord are great, (Pſal. CXI. 2, &c.) ſought out of all them that " have pleaſure therein: The works of his hands are verity and judg- " ment, all his commandments are ſure: They ſtand faſt for ever and " ever, and are done in truth and uprightneſs: He ſent redemption " unto his people, he hath commanded his covenant for ever, holy " and reverend is his name."

The incarnation of the Son of God, for inſtance, is one of the greateſt wonders of almighty love; it is not only wonderful in itſelf, but wonderful in all its circumſtances. A great perſon's coming into the world is ſomething remarkable, the appearance of an angel is much more extraordinary, but the coming of a God—" the Word that was " in the beginning and was with God and was God, to be made fleſh " and to dwell among us"—never any thing was like this! and it muſt be uſeful as well as curious to obſerve how infinite wiſdom conducts a thing ſo beſide and above all that ever was in nature. Now in the contemplation of this ſingular event there are four things which principally offer themſelves to view, the manner of our Saviour's birth, the mother of our Lord, the place of his nativity, and other circumſtances attending it.

I. It is certain our Saviour might have aſſumed our nature in what manner he pleaſed: but he ſubmits to the loweſt ſtate of humanity, and condeſcends not only to become incarnate, but to be born. The divine Word becomes an infant; and He, who " made the worlds," (Hebr. I. 2.) when he taketh upon him to deliver man, doth not abhor the virgin's woman. This method, we may aſſure ourſelves, would not have been taken, if it had not been the beſt and fitteſt method; and let

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us then analyſe the ſeveral parts of it, and ſee wherein the fitneſs of it doth conſiſt. If it was expedient that the Son of God ſhould become incarnate and be made man, yet why was he made of a woman; and why of a woman alone; and why of a virgin? Theſe are inquiries which deſerve a ſolution, and a proper ſolution cannot but have a good effect. For by ſatisfying ourſelves of the reaſonableneſs of our Saviour's nativity, we ſhall be more confirmed in our belief of this important article. Reaſon always ſtrengthens faith, as faith again ſupplies the defects of reaſon.

1. It was fitting that our Saviour ſhould be born, to ſhow that he was really and truly man; and be born of a woman, that as woman was the means of bringing ſin into the world, ſo woman might alſo be the inſtrument of bringing in ſalvation, and thereby take away the reproach of her ſex. Had Chriſt, like the angels of old, aſſumed a body without being born, it might have been ſuſpected that he had only the appearance of a man and not the ſubſtance; and thoſe ancient Heretics, who denied the reality of his human nature, would have been furniſhed with one better argument for their hereſy than all that they ever offered. Thoſe Heretics appeared very early in the Chriſtian church; and I think they were called Δοκηται not from their author and founder, but from their opinion; becauſe they fancied that Chriſt did all things εν δοκησει in appearance only and not in reality. And if our Saviour had never been born, and had come into the world with a body we know not how, there might have been ſome pretence for ſuch an opinion: but now our Saviour hath plainly confuted it by almoſt every paſſage of his life, and particularly by his birth, and ſhoweth himſelf to be really and truly man in all the ſtages and inſtances of humanity. He was made man to do honor to the one ſex, and he was made of a woman to do honor to the other.

2. It was fitting that he ſhould be born of a woman alone, without the concurrence of a man, by the power of the Holy Ghoſt, to procure him the greater reverence by ſo miraculous a birth, and thereby to diſtinguiſh him for the Son of God. He was born of a woman as a proof of his humanity; and he was born of a woman alone as a proof of

of his divinity. For indeed it might be expected, that the only Son of God would not come into the world in the ſame manner as all the ſons of men; it might be expected that his nativity as he was the ſon of man would be partly natural, and as he was the Son of God would be partly ſupernatural. And in the goſpel-oeconomy we know all ſupernatural operations or miracles are attributed to the Holy Ghoſt. There ſeemeth alſo to be a particular propriety in this diſpenſation, that He who was to be perfectly holy ſhould be conceived in the womb by the operation of the Spirit of holineſs. "The Holy Ghoſt ſhall come "upon thee," ſays the Angel, (Luke I. 35.) "and the power of the "higheſt ſhall overſhadow thee; therefore alſo that holy thing which "ſhall be born of thee ſhall be called the Son of God."

3. It was fitting that he ſhould be born of a virgin, that this operation of the Holy Spirit might be the more conſpicuous; that having no earthly father, it might be the more clear and indubitable, that he was as he was called the Son of God. So it ſeemeth in reaſon it ſhould be, and ſo it is foretold in ſcripture it would be, in each of theſe inſtances. That our Saviour ſhould be born of a *woman* was foretold as early as the fall; (Gen. III. 15.) "The ſeed of the woman ſhall bruiſe "the ſerpent's head." That he ſhould be born of *a woman alone* is foretold in Jeremiah; (Jer. XXXI. 22.) "The Lord hath created a "new thing in the earth, a woman ſhall compaſs a man." That he ſhould be born of *a virgin* is foretold in the well-known prophecy of Iſaiah; (Iſ. VII. 14.) "Behold a virgin ſhall conceive and bear a ſon." And ſo the ancient Jews underſtood theſe prophecies, whatever modern Jews, or Infidels who perſonate Jews, may pretend to the contrary.

II. But if it was fitting that the mother of our Lord ſhould be a virgin, yet why was the virgin Mary particularly choſen for this purpoſe? why was this honor conferred upon her preferably to all other virgins? I cannot think with ſome that the reaſon of this lay in the name of Mary, it being ſo common a name at that time: but ſtill this is obſervable of the name, that the deliverance of the Iſraelites from the bondage of Egypt being a type of our deliverance from the bondage of ſin, as there was a Miriam or Mary inſtrumental in the one and celebrating

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it with ſongs of praiſe, ſo there was a Miriam or Mary inſtrumental in the other and celebrating it likewiſe with ſongs of praiſe; and as the former Mary was related to Elizabeth the wife of Aaron, ſo the latter Mary was related to an Elizabeth too, the wife of a prieſt of the line of Aaron.

It is certainly more to the purpoſe, and a more proper anſwer to this inquiry, that ſhe was of the houſe and lineage of David; and ſo the Meſſiah was born of her to fulfil the prophecies, who was to be as of the race of mankind, of the ſeed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, ſo particularly of the family of David. But here an objection is made, that Mary being "the couſin of Elizabeth," and Elizabeth being "of "the daughters of Aaron," (Luke I. 5, 36.) it may be preſumed that Mary alſo was of the tribe of Levi rather than of the tribe of Judah. But yet Mary may have been of the houſe of David, though related to Elizabeth of the houſe of Aaron; for there have been frequent inſtances of intermarriages between the royal and the prieſtly lines. Aaron himſelf married an Eliſheba or Elizabeth, "daughter of Amminadab," and "ſiſter of Naaſhon, captain of the children of Judah," (Exod. VI. 23. Numb. II. 3.) or "prince of the children of Judah." (1 Chron. II. 10.) In the Chronicles (2 Chron. XXII. 11.) we read of "Jeho-"ſhabeath the daughter of king Jehoram, the wife of Jehoiada the "prieſt." Joſephus the Jewiſh hiſtorian (1) in his account of his own life boaſteth of his deſcent by his father from the firſt rank of prieſts, and by his mother from the race of kings. If the genealogy of Mary is given by St. Luke, as many learned men think, and Joſeph was only by his marriage with Mary the ſon of Heli, then the point is clearly determined. But without that preſumption, if Mary had not been of the houſe of David, how could St. Peter ſay (Acts II. 30.) that Jeſus was "of the fruit of his loins according to the fleſh?" how could St. Paul ſay (Acts XIII. 23.) that "of David's ſeed hath God according "to his promiſe raiſed unto Iſrael a Saviour Jeſus?" how could he ſay again (Rom. I. 3.) that "Jeſus Chriſt our Lord was made of the ſeed "of David according to the fleſh?" Theſe ſayings and the like would

(1) Joſ. Vita. Sect. 1. p. 904. Edit. Hudſon.

not

not have been ſtrictly true, if Jeſus had none other relation to David, than through one who was only his ſuppoſed father, but was not really ſo: nor could the Jews deſire a better argument to prove that Jeſus was not the true Meſſiah.

But though ſhe was of the royal family, yet ſhe was poor and in a "low eſtate" (Luke I. 48.) as ſhe herſelf expreſſeth it; that ſo her ſon might have the readier opportunity of taſting affliction for us, and as he was to be made perfect through ſufferings his ſufferings might commence from his very cradle. She was alſo a perſon of great piety and virtue, as appears indeed from her whole behaviour, and particularly from the ſpirit with which her hymn called Magnificat is indited; and therefore ſhe was the more worthy of ſuch an honor. And though ſhe was a virgin, yet ſhe was a virgin (Luke I. 27.) "eſpouſed to a "man whoſe name was Joſeph of the houſe of David," that ſo neither ſhe herſelf might ſuffer in her reputation, "nor honorable marriage "might be diſreputed, ſays Biſhop Taylor, and ſeem inglorious by a "poſitive rejection from any participation in the honor;" that ſo Jeſus might appear to be the ſon of David both ways, by legal as well as by natural deſcent, by his reputed father as well as by his real mother.

Whether the Virgin Mary continued a virgin ever afterwards, as it is impoſſible for us to know ſo it is ridiculous to diſpute. It is the general tradition of the Church, and for this reaſon if not for any other it is the more probable opinion that ſhe did ſo: but the ſcripture aſſerts nothing deciſive either for it or againſt it. When Joſeph took unto him his wife, it is ſaid (Matt. I. 25.) that "he knew her not till "ſhe had brought forth her firſt-born ſon:" but *her firſt-born ſon* doth not neceſſarily imply that ſhe had other ſons, as when it is ſaid (Exod. XIII. 2.) "Sanctify unto me all the firſt-born," the firſt-born was holy unto the Lord whether there were other children or not; and neither doth *his knowing her not till then* clearly infer that he knew her afterwards, being ſpoken only of the time preceding without any reference to the time following; as God promiſed Jacob (Gen. XXVIII. 15.) "I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have ſpoken "to thee of," and as (1 Sam. XV. 35.) "Samuel came no more to

" ſee Saul unto the day of his death;" and as (2 Sam. VI. 23.) "Michal " the daughter of Saul had no child unto the day of her death:" and conſequently nothing certain can be concluded from hence one way or other. There is mention indeed in the goſpels of the *brethren* of Jeſus; but theſe might be the ſons of Joſeph by another wife, or more probably were only *couſin-germans* to Jeſus, for ſuch among the Jews were called *brethren*, and frequently in ſcripture.

If we know little of her life we know ſtill leſs of her death; and neither can we collect from ſcripture or tradition whether ſhe died a martyr or not. Many have ſuppoſed that ſhe did by reaſon of Simeon's prophecy, (Luke II. 35.) " Yea a ſword ſhall pierce through thy " own ſoul alſo:" but this might be only a metaphorical form of ſpeech to denote ſome great trouble and affliction that ſhould befall her, and might be fulfilled particularly when ſhe ſtood by the croſs beholding her ſon crucified. It is the more probable that ſhe did not ſuffer martyrdom, as St. John did not with whom ſhe lived after our Saviour's crucifixion.

Indeed little or nothing can be ſaid of her with certainty, but what is contained in the ſcripture; and the ſcripture is remarkably ſilent in relation to her. She is not often mentioned in the Goſpels; ſhe is mentioned but once in the Acts of the Apoſtles, and not ſo much as once throughout all the Epiſtles. And in all probability the reaſon of this remarkable ſilence was, that the Holy Spirit foreſaw the extravagant regard which ſome Chriſtians would have for her in after ages, and the leſs was left of her upon record the leſs ground and handle there would be for any ſuperſtition.

We may be the more encouraged to think this was the reaſon, becauſe in moſt of the paſſages where ſhe is mentioned, ſhe is mentioned in ſuch a manner as ſeemeth deſigned to prevent or obviate this very ſuperſtition. She ſaith of herſelf indeed, (Luke I. 58.) " All genera- " tions ſhall call me bleſſed;" but that is much the ſame that Leah ſaid of herſelf upon the birth of Aſher, (Gen. XXX. 13.) " Happy " am I for the daughters will call me bleſſed;" and that was ſaid of the ſons of Jacob in the prophet Malachi, (III. 12.) " all nations ſhall call " you

" you bleſſed." The angel Gabriel ſaith unto her, (Luke I. 28.) " Thou art highly favored;" and ſo the ſame angel Gabriel ſaid unto Daniel, (Dan. IX. 23.) " Thou art greatly beloved." The angel ſaith unto her, (Luke, ib.) " The Lord is with thee;" and ſo the angel ſaid unto Gideon, (Judg. VI. 12.) " The Lord is with thee thou " mighty man of valor." It is ſaid unto her, (Luke, ib.) " Bleſſed " art thou among women;" and it was ſaid of Jael ſtill ſtronger, (Judg. V. 24.) " Bleſſed above women ſhall Jael be." It is ſaid of her (Luke I. 30.) " Thou haſt found favor with God;" and thus it was ſaid of Noah, that he (Gen. VI. 8.) " found grace in the eyes of " the Lord;" and of David (Acts VII. 46.) that " he found favor " before God."

So that in theſe paſſages which are moſt for her honor, there is little or nothing more ſaid of her than is ſaid of others elſewhere; but in the other paſſages where ſhe is mentioned, ſhe is mentioned (as I ſaid) in ſuch a manner, as ſeemeth deſigned to prevent or obviate any fond opinion concerning her. When Jeſus was yet but twelve years old, he ſaid unto her (Luke II. 49.) " How is it that you ſought me? wiſt " you not that I muſt be about my father's buſineſs?" At the marriage in Cana upon her ſpeaking to him he ſays unto her, (John II. 4) " Wo- " man what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come." When it was told him that his mother and his brethren ſtood without deſiring to ſpeak with him, he ſaid (Matt. XII. 48.) " Who is my mo- " ther and who are my brethren? And he ſtretched forth his hand to- " wards his diſciples and ſaid, Behold my mother and my brethren; " for whoſoever ſhall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the " ſame is my brother and ſiſter and mother." Once as he was teach- ing the people, upon a certain woman's crying out, (Luke XI. 27, 28.) " Bleſſed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou haſt " ſucked, Yea rather bleſſed, ſays he, are they that hear the word of " God and keep it." As he was expiring upon the croſs, he bequeaths the care of his mother to St. John, only in this form, (John XIX. 26, 27.) ſaying unto her " Woman behold thy ſon," and ſaying unto him " Behold thy mother." Once more ſhe is mentioned in the Acts of

the Apoſtles in this manner; (Acts I. 19.) "Theſe all continued with "one accord in prayer and ſupplication with the women and Mary the "mother of Jeſus and his brethren." Here are no particular titles given her, and here we ſee ſhe is not invocated or prayed to, but is joining in prayer and ſupplication with others.

But yet notwithſtanding all theſe texts, how fond is the ſuperſtition, how groſs the idolatry of the Church of Rome in this particular! It is enough to make any one's ears tingle, to hear the fulſome things which they ſay of her and to her. Where they addreſs one prayer to God or to Chriſt, they addreſs ten to the Virgin Mary; ſo that as one (2) well obſerves, they deſerve to be called Mariani rather than Chriſtiani, the worſhippers of Mary rather than the diſciples of Chriſt. They may charge us with want of reſpect to the bleſſed Virgin; but we pay her as much reſpect as is conſiſtent with ſcripture and reaſon, as much as was paid her by the primitive Church for at leaſt three hundred years after Chriſt. And more than this we cannot do; for we know as there is only "one God," (1 Tim. II. 15.) ſo there is only "one mediator "between God and men the man Chriſt Jeſus." They may have "their Gods many and their Lords many," (1 Cor. VIII. 6.) but "to "us there is but one God the Father of whom are all things and we in "him, and one Lord Jeſus Chriſt by whom are all things and we by "him."

III. Let this ſuffice for an account of the mother of our Lord, and now let us proceed to the other particulars, the place of his nativity, and other circumſtances attending it. We are naturally curious to know ſomething of the native places of perſons, who have been eminent and illuſtrious in the world, and eſpecially of ſuch as have been great benefactors and friends to ourſelves and to mankind. The place of our Saviour's nativity was *Bethlehem*, or the houſe of bread, as the name ſignifies in Hebrew. There were two Bethlehems, one in the tribe of Zebulun, (Joſh. XIX. 15.) the other in the tribe of Judah, and this, to diſtinguiſh it, is called (Matt. II. 1.) "Bethlehem of Judea," a city at the diſtance of about two leagues or ſix miles ſouth from Jeruſalem. It

(2) Biſhop Bull.

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was otherwiſe called *Ephrath* or *Ephrata*, and its inhabitants Ephrathites; (Gen. XLVIII. 7.) "the ſame is Bethlehem." It was the birth-place of David, and therefore was fitly made alſo the birth-place of this ſon of David, the type and antitype in this reſpect as well in others exactly correſponding with each other: and few cities can boaſt the honor of having two ſuch memorable deſcendents.

But there was a farther reaſon for our Saviour's being born at Bethlehem, becauſe it was preſignified by the Spirit of prophecy. Micah is the prophet who foretold this event, (V. 2.) "But thou, Bethlehem "Ephrata, though thou be little among the thouſands of Judah, yet "out of thee ſhall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Iſrael." Which prophecy is thus cited and applied by St. Matthew, or rather by the chief-prieſts and ſcribes whom Herod aſſembled, (Matt. II. 4, 5, 6.) and "demanded of them where Chriſt ſhould be born: And they ſaid "unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea, for thus it is written by the pro-"phet, And thou, Bethlehem in the land of Juda, art not the leaſt "among the princes of Juda; for out of thee ſhall come a governor "that ſhall rule my people Iſrael." You may perceive that the citation in St. Matthew varies in ſome inſtances from the prediction in Micah; but they are ſuch variations as may eaſily be reconciled, and make no material difference between them. What in the prophet is *But thou Bethlehem Ephrata*, in the evangeliſt is *And thou Bethlehem in the land of Juda*, which are only different names for one and the ſame place, the former being perhaps the more uſual name in the prophet's days, and the latter in the days of Herod. What in the prophet is *though thou be little*, in the evangeliſt is *thou art not the leaſt*; but in the original there is no ſuch word as *though*, which is therefore printed in a different character in our tranſlation. To reconcile this ſeeming contradiction, it has been propoſed to read the original like the Syriac verſion with a note of interrogation, which carries the force of a negation; *Art thou little* as much as to ſay *Thou art not little*. Some Hebrew words ſignify contraries, and the learned Dr. Pocock in his comment upon Micah hath proved from Jewiſh authorities, that the ſame word ſignifies both *great* and *little*, and may be

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rendered indifferently by the one or the other. But what appears to me moſt probable and rational is the very ingenious conjecture of Houbigant, that the chief prieſts and ſcribes read the text as it is cited in St. Matthew with a negative particle, *thou art not little*, or *thou art not the leaſt*, which reſtores the juſt order of the words at preſent miſplaced, improves the conſtruction, and agrees better with the ſenſe of the paſſage. What in the prophet is *among the thouſands of Judah*, in the evangeliſt is *among the princes of Juda*; for as our counties are divided into *hundreds*, ſo the Jewiſh tribes were diſtributed into *thouſands*, and over every thouſand was a prince or ruler, by which means the ſame word came to denote a *thouſand* or a *prince* of a thouſand; ſo that *among the thouſands of Judah* and *among the princes of Juda* are of the ſame import and ſignification. There is little variation between the prophet's *yet out of thee ſhall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Iſrael*, and the evangeliſt's *for out of thee ſhall come a governor that ſhall rule my people Iſrael*; either of which is a very good reaſon, why Bethlehem is *not the leaſt* among the thouſands of Judah. What follows in the prophet, "Whoſe "goings forth have been from of old, from everlaſting," was not cited by the chief prieſts and ſcribes, as no way relating to Herod's inquiry, and being perhaps not ſufficiently underſtood by them; for this myſtery can be explained only by the Chriſtian revelation. The Chaldee paraphraſt expreſly applies this prediction to the Chriſt or the Meſſiah; and no ſingle prophecy can be a ſtronger proof of his divine miſſion. Not only the chief prieſts and ſcribes, but alſo the people underſtood, that the Chriſt was to be born at Bethlehem; and Jeſus living in Galilee, they concluded that he muſt have been born there, and therefore they denied him to be the Chriſt. (John VII. 41, 42.) "Others ſaid, This is "the Chriſt. But ſome ſaid, Shall Chriſt come out of Galilee? Hath "not the ſcripture ſaid, That Chriſt cometh out of the ſeed of David, "and out of the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" They muſt have been convinced by their own argument, had they but known that he was a native of Bethlehem.

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His being born at this place was the more extraordinary, becauſe his parents dwelt at Nazareth in Galilee, at a conſiderable diſtance from Bethlehem in Judea, the country of Samaria lying between Galilee and Judea properly ſo called. It was by no means likely that they ſhould undertake ſuch a journey, when the wife was big with child, and traveling muſt be very inconvenient to them. But ſee, how wonderfully the providence of God interpoſed, and ſo directed the courſe of affairs as to bring about this ſignal event in a natural and eaſy manner. It happened that Auguſtus iſſued a decree for taking a deſcription or ſurvey of the whole Roman empire, with a regiſter of all the perſons and eſtates belonging to it. Judea being at that time a dependent tributary kingdom, and included within the province of Syria, the Jews as well as all the people of other provinces went to be regiſtered and enrolled, "every one into his own city," as St. Luke (II. 3.) relates. Joſeph and Mary therefore, being of the houſe and lineage of David, were obliged to go to Bethlehem the city of David, in order to have their names as citizens entered and enrolled among thoſe of the ſame houſe and family. While they were tarrying there upon this occaſion, the days were accompliſhed that ſhe ſhould be delivered, and ſhe brought forth her ſon, Chriſt our Lord, who being in this unexpected manner born and regiſtered in the city of David, appears to be, as it was foretold he ſhould be, "the ſon of David."

IV. The other circumſtances of his nativity are all full of humility, and at the ſame time full of wonder. In the one we ſee the Son of man, in the other we may diſcover the Son of God. He is but juſt conceived in the womb, and can any thing be lower than that? but even there he is ſaluted for our Lord, and his forerunner leapeth in the womb for joy. The place of his nativity is not Nazareth where his parents dwelt, nor the great city Jeruſalem, but little Bethlehem of Judea; but by this ſeemingly trifling event he appears to be of the houſe of David; and a remarkable prophecy, as we have juſt now ſeen, is remarkably fulfilled. There being no room in the inn, he is born in the ſtable; but then his birth is ſung and celebrated by a multitude of angels. He lieth wrapt in ſwadling cloaths without any thing of worldly

worldly glory or ſplendor to diſtinguiſh him; but then his ſtar (a proper emblem of him who is called (Luke I. 78. 2 Pet. I. 19.) "the "day-ſpring and the day-ſtar") is ſeen ſhining by day and pointing out the very place where he lieth. He is attended only by a few poor ſhepherds of his own countrymen; but then there are Magi or Wiſemen, who come from the eaſt to worſhip him with offerings of gold and frankincenſe and myrrh. He is preſented in the temple with only a pair of turtle doves or two young pidgeons, the offering of the poor, a lamb being the offering of the rich; but then he is received as the Meſſiah by thoſe who waited for the conſolation of Iſrael, it is reckoned happineſs enough but to have ſeen him, and He is declared to be "a "light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of the people Iſrael." Soon after he was born, his life was cruelly ſought after by Herod, who the more effectually to ſecure his purpoſe ordered all the young children in Bethlehem and the neighbourhood to be ſlain; but he marvelouſly eſcapes this danger, Joſeph being divinely admoniſhed in a dream to carry him down into Egypt, and admoniſhed a ſecond time to bring him back again, when the tyrant was dead; whereby that was again accompliſhed in him, which was ſaid before of Iſrael (Hoſ. XI. 1. Matt. II. 15.) "Out of Egypt have I called my ſon."

Several practical and moral reflections might alſo be made upon our Saviour's nativity, but we will confine ourſelves only to two. And as it was juſt now obſerved, that this whole tranſaction was full of humility and at the ſame time full of wonder; ſo we may learn from hence humility and condeſcenſion to our brethren, and gratitude and thankſgiving to Almighty God.

What can be a more powerful and engaging motive to humility and condeſcenſion to our brethren, than this example of humility and condeſcenſion in the Son of God? He was in the boſom of the Father poſſeſſed of glory before the world was; and yet for our ſakes he condeſcended not only to humanity, but even to the loweſt ſtate and circumſtances of human nature. (2 Cor. VIII. 9.) "Though he was rich; "yet for our ſakes he became poor that we through his poverty "might be rich." And if the beloved Son of God could condeſcend

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ſo much for the ſake of ſuch creatures as men; can the higheſt of men think themſelves above ſtooping to the loweſt offices for the ſake of thoſe who are of the ſame nature with themſelves? Think what our Saviour was in heaven, (Hebr. I. 3.) "the brightneſs of his Father's glory "and the expreſs image of his perſon;" and then think what he was upon earth, (Luke II. 12.) "wrapped in ſwadling cloaths and lying in "a manger;" and ſurely all human pride muſt be quite abaſhed and out of countenance. What are all the titles and diſtinctions, all the pomp and pageantry of this world? Can they create any ſuch difference between man and man, as may in the leaſt be compared to the infinite diſtance that there is between man and God, the creature and the Creator? "Pride certainly was not made for a man," (Ecclus X. 18.) and much leſs for a Chriſtian, a diſciple of the meek and lowly Jeſus. "Love therefore as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous;" (1 Pet. III. 8.) "Mind not high things but condeſcend to men of low eſtate;" (Rom. XII. 16.) "Let this mind be in you which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus, "(Philip. II. 5, &c.) who being in the form of God made himſelf of "no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was "made in the likeneſs of men."

Again, what gratitude and thankſgiving are due to almighty God for ſending thus his only Son into the world made of a woman, to redeem them who are born of woman? The angels celebrated our Saviour's nativity with hymns of praiſe, ſinging at the redemption of the world as well as at the creation. At the creation of the world, as we read in the book of Job, (XXXVIII. 7.) when God "laid the foun-"dations of the earth, the morning ſtars ſang together and the ſons of "God ſhouted for joy." "And again, when he bringeth in the firſt "begotten into the world, he ſaith, Let all the angels of God worſhip "him:" (Heb. I. 6.) And if an angel proclaims theſe glad tidings with joy, how much more ought we with joy to receive them? If thoſe bleſſed ſpirits delight ſo much in the proſperity and happineſs of others, ſhall we be ſo ſtupid and inſenſible as not to rejoice in our own? It doth not appear that the angels received any immediate benefit to themſelves by the incarnation of the Son of God. (Heb. II. 16.) "For verily

" he took not on him the nature of angels but he took on him the ſeed " of Abraham." It was not at all for their ſakes, but for us men and for our ſalvation that he came down from heaven and was incarnate by the Holy Ghoſt of the virgin Mary and was made man. As ours is the benefit and advantage, ours alſo ſhould be the gratitude and thankſgiving. And what inſtances of love will kindle and inflame our hearts into gratitude, the fervors and raptures of gratitude, if this love of God in Chriſt Jeſus will not? This is enough to make even the " tongue of " the dumb to ſing;" and as our Saviour ſaid upon a like occaſion, (Luke XIX. 40.) " If we ſhould hold our peace, the ſtones would im- " mediately cry out." " O come therefore, (Pſal. XCV. 6.) let us " worſhip and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Let us cry with the tranſported multitude, (Luke XIX. 38.) " Bleſſed " be the king that cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, " glory in the higheſt." Let us ſing with the rapturous heavenly hoſt, " Glory to God in the higheſt and on earth peace, good will towards " men." That ſo joining with them here we may join with them hereafter in their divine ſong, (Rev. V. 12, 13.) " Worthy is the Lamb " that was ſlain to receive power and riches and wiſdom and ſtrength " and honor and glory and bleſſing." Therefore " bleſſing and ho- " nor and glory and power be unto Him that ſitteth upon the throne " and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

DISSERTATION VI.

On the TIME of our SAVIOUR's appearing.

THERE has been ſome difference of opinion concerning the year and the day of our Saviour's nativity. It is now generally agreed among chronologers, that the year was four years before the vulgar com-

computation uſed throughout all Chriſtendom. The day is more uncertain, but it could hardly have been the 25th of December according to the Latin, or the 6th of January according to the Greek fathers. It is with much more reaſon ſuppoſed by Scaliger and other the moſt learned chronologers to have been in September, for a general enrolment of the people could more conveniently have been taken in autumn than in the depth of winter; and neither at this ſeaſon of the year could there have been "ſhepherds abiding in the field, keeping "watch over their flock by night." However thus much is certain, that Jeſus Chriſt was born in the days of Herod the king, and while Auguſtus Cæſar was emperor of Rome. And why is the time of our Saviour's coming into the world emphatically called *the fulneſs of the time?* (Gal. IV. 4.) "When the fulneſs of the time was come, God "ſent forth his Son." Why did God pitch upon that particular ſeaſon for the manifeſtation of his Son? This work was deſigned from the foundation of the world; and wherefore was it ſo long before it was accompliſhed?

Now if we ſhould reſolve this part of the divine conduct into the ſole arbitrary will and good pleaſure of almighty God, would not this be a ſufficient anſwer to our inquiry, and might we not perfectly acquieſce in it? Is not his all-wiſe will and pleaſure reaſon enough for any thing? May he not ſhower down his bleſſings, and diſpenſe the riches of his mercy at what times he ſeeth proper? Is the frame and ſtructure of the world, the orderly variety and harmonious diſcord of its parts leſs admirable, leſs excellent, becauſe we know not the reaſons why God created it near 6000 years ago, why he ſingled out that portion of time from all eternity and made the heavens and earth neither ſooner nor later? In like manner if we cannot penetrate into the deſign of God's ſending forth his Son under the reign of Auguſtus Cæſar particularly, neither in times preceding nor in times following, is therefore the ſecond creation by Chriſt Jeſus leſs meritorious, or leſs apt to excite our love and adoration, our joy and thankfulneſs? Ought we not rather to praiſe God that our bleſſed Saviour is come into the world at all, than raiſe ſcruples and difficulties about the *time* of his coming?

and is not our humility better expreſſed by the one, than our wiſdom ſhown in the other.

(Acts I. 7.) "It is not for us to know the times or the ſeaſons, which the Father hath put in his own power." However we may reſt aſſured that the All-wiſe Oeconomiſt doeth nothing upon humour and caprice, nothing but upon the profoundeſt reaſon and exacteſt judgment. He "maketh every thing beautiful in his time," as Solomon ſpeaketh; (Eccleſ. III. 11.) and unknown to us, a thouſand circumſtances might concur to the production of this great event at that time, rather than at any other. Perhaps the world was better diſpoſed to receive the goſpel in that age than in any other before or ſince. Perhaps, as the Jewiſh religion is in moſt things a type of the Chriſtian; ſo particularly the duration of the one is deſigned in ſome manner to prefigure the duration of the other. Perhaps the time of our Saviour's appearance was adapted to the time the world is to continue; and his birth is placed neither ſo far backwards nor forwards, as to be for the laſt ages too early or too late for the firſt. Such poſſibly may be the ſtate of the caſe, and therefore we cannot abſolutely ſay that it is not: and one would entertain any conjecture, rather than believe that infinite wiſdom will not contrive, and infinite power will not execute, every thing after the beſt and fitteſt and moſt becoming manner. With theſe and ſuch reflections as theſe, might we ſatisfy ourſelves, if we were wholly in the dark in this matter; and though we could not apprehend the reaſons of this procedure, yet we might implicitly acquieſce in it, and thankfully adore it.

But, I conceive, there is hardly any of the divine diſpenſations which carrieth not the ſtamp and impreſs of divinity upon it: at leaſt if we cannot diſcover evident reaſons for them, yet we cannot make any juſt exception againſt them. God ſcarcely ever leaveth himſelf without witneſs: In what relates to man, he condeſcends in ſome meaſure to the capacities of man: and in this particular tranſaction, I preſume, we may trace the footſteps of infinite wiſdom, if we will ſet ourſelves ſeriouſly to conſider and ſearch after them.

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It was not fitting that the Son of God ſhould appear in the fleſh, before there was an evident and abſolute neceſſity for his appearance. The ſtrongeſt remedies are not to be applied, till the gentler become inſufficient, and the caſe groweth deſperate. When all other methods had been put in practice, and had proved ineffectual to reform the world; then (and not till then) was it expedient for "the Word to "be made fleſh, and dwell among us." In the firſt ages of the world revelations were frequent; and the lives of the patriarchs were of ſo long duration, that oral doctrins, if ever, might then certainly have been preſerved and tranſmitted pure from generation to generation. But ſtill the farther the ſtream flowed from the ſpring-head, the more it was corrupted. The world was ſunk in idolatry; and then inſtead of a traditional law God thought fit to promulge a written one, and choſe out a peculiar people to himſelf to be the keepers of his records, and the regiſters of his providence. But theſe "turned aſide "like a deceitful bow," (Pſal. LXXVIII. 57.) and inſtead of winning others over to the true religion, often fell away from it themſelves; and therefore a ſtanding general revelation failing God was pleaſed to make particular applications to them, and ſent his ſervants the prophets, as one of them pathetically complains, (Jer. VII. 25, 26.) "daily riſing up early "and ſending them; yet they hearkened not unto him, nor inclined "their ear, but hardened their neck and did worſe than their fathers." Since then his mercies could not allure, his judgments were poured out to awe them into their duty: "he delivered their ſtrength into cap-"tivity and their glory into the enemies hands:" (Pſal. LXXXVIII. 61.) he withdrew his holy Spirit, and for near 400 years before Chriſt, there were neither prophetic nor miraculous giſts among them. But this notwithſtanding wickedneſs, like a deluge, ſtill overſpread the face of the earth, and the world was not to be reformed by oral or written laws, by bleſſings or judgments. Thus when God had, at "ſundry times and in "divers manners" revealed himſelf to mankind, and all theſe revelations had fallen ſhort of the deſired effect, then and not before was it ſeaſonable for him to ſpeak unto us by his Son. The polity of God in this reſpect is aptly delineated in the parable of the vineyard (Mark XII. 1, &c.) The Lord

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ſent his ſervants, one after another, to demand his fruits; but the huſbandmen having caſt them out and ſlain them, laſt of all he ſent his ſon, ſaying "they will reverence my ſon." And indeed the incarnation of the Son of God ſeemeth to be the utmoſt effort of the utmoſt love, and therefore was not to be employed but upon the utmoſt neceſſity: and as the Chriſtian religion is the beſt revelation that God hath ever made of himſelf, ſo was it proper that it ſhould be the laſt.

The world too, it ſeemeth, was not fitted to receive ſo perfect and ſpiritual an inſtitution at the firſt, but was to be trained up by certain ſteps and degrees to the knowlege of Chriſt. Accordingly we may obſerve, that the true religions, which have obtained among men, are not oppoſite but only preparatory to the evangelical diſpenſation, and are ſo many meſſengers, as it were, to "make ſtrait the way of the "Lord." Natural religion is a neceſſary introduction to revealed; and whoever admits the former, cannot, with any conſiſtency to his own principles, reject the latter. The Jewiſh religion is confeſſedly typical and prefigurative of the Chriſtian, and the Old Teſtament is the beſt key to open and unlock the treaſures of the New. The Apoſtle therefore (Gal. III. 24.) calleth the law our "ſchoolmaſter to bring us unto "Chriſt:" and in another place (IV. 1, &c.) compares the ſtate of mankind under the Moſaical œconomy to that of "a heir under tutors "and governors; until the time appointed of the father. Even ſo "we when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of "the world; but when the fulneſs of the time was come, God ſent "forth his Son." So that God hath accommodated himſelf to the weakneſſes of mankind, and hath proportioned the meaſure of his revelations to the tempers and capacities of his hearers. When the world was young, he fed it with milk; (Heb. V. 13, 14.) but "ſtrong meat "belongeth to them who are of full age."

Beſides, it became the majeſty of the Son of God not to come into the world, till ſeveral prophets in ſeveral ages had given notice of his coming. Had only ſome particular predictions been publiſhed of the Meſſiah in ſome particular age, they might poſſibly have been aſcribed to chance or ſuſpected of religious fraud: but that ſo many men in ſo many

many ages, of different tribes and families of different conditions and inclinations, ſhould all unite in the ſame deſign of impoſing upon mankind, how is it probable? that ſuch a ſeries of prophecies, from Adam down to Malachi, all exactly fulfilled in the perſon of Chriſt, ſhould be the work of chance, how is it poſſible? This variety of prophets and prophecies all tending to the ſame end is like a number of lines all drawn from different ſpheres, and yet all viſibly uniting and terminating in one common center. I have not time to purſue this fruitful head of argument as it deſerves. I will only ſay, this is one of the ſtrongeſt evidences for the truth of our religion, and of this evidence we ſhould have been deprived, had Chriſt appeared ſome ages ſooner.

Our bleſſed Saviour came into the world at that point of time which the prophets had beforehand marked out for his coming. He came a little before the final diſſolution of the Jewiſh ſtate, as the patriarch Jacob had foretold; (Gen. XLIX. 10.) He came while the ſecond temple was ſtanding, as the prophets Haggai (II. 7.) and Malachi (III. 1.) had foretold; He came towards the end of 70 weeks (that is 490 years) from the going forth of the decree to rebuild Jeruſalem, as was ſignified in Daniel's prophecy. (IX. 24, &c.) Well therefore may that be called *the fulneſs of the time*, when the time appointed by God and foretold by the prophets was ſo punctually *fulfilled*.

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tice of ſeveral others. The ſame author (2) farther informs us, that the chief reaſon why the Jews engaged in that unequal war with the Romans, was becauſe every moment they expected their ſaviour and deliverer. Nor was this notion of a great prince to come prevalent among the Jews only, but was diffeminated and had taken deep root in the moſt conſiderable parts of the earth. The Roman hiſtorians (3) Suetonius and Tacitus affirm, it was a current report in all the eaſt, that a certain prince ſhould then ariſe out of Judea, and attain the empire of the world. The Romans themſelves were not a little apprehenſive of it, and for that reaſon had always a jealous eye over the Jews: and in the court of Rome itſelf it was a compliment more than once paid to the emperor or ſome great man, to aſſure him that he was the mighty prince and glorious deliverer who was then expected in the world. A ſignal inſtance of this kind is the Pollio of Virgil. It is well known, this eclogue is partly tranſcribed from the old Sybilline oracles; and a great many verſes in it bear a remarkable reſemblance to ſeveral lofty paſſages in the prophetical writings, and do only and can only belong properly to the Meſſiah. Our Saviour therefore was very fitly and very ſeaſonably born at that time, when mens hopes and fears were awakened, and the whole world ſtood ſilent, as it were, in expectation of him. This was a ſolemnity proper to introduce the Son of God, and could not but add great weight and dignity to his perſon and character.

Other reaſons there were, which made that age more fit for the promulgation of the goſpel, than any other that has preceded or followed it. It was, through the power of the Romans and the policy of Auguſtus, a time of general peace. I do not pretend to ſay, as others have ſaid, that it was a time of univerſal peace, that the temple of Janus was ſhut in the year of Chriſt's nativity, that all wars had ceaſed throughout the world, and tranquillity and harmony reigned every where. So fair a repreſentation will hardly be found conſiſtent with the truth of hiſtory; but it may be truly aſſerted, that the civil wars of the Romans being compoſed, the empire eſtabliſhed in Auguſtus,

(2) Ib. de Bel. Jud. l. 7. (3) Suet. in Vit. Veſp. Tacit. Hiſt. l. 5.

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and ſo many nations reduced under the dominion of Rome, it was a time of more general peace than many others both before and after it. And in what ſeaſon could the *Prince of Peace* more becomingly make his entry than in this? When could a religion that was deſigned to perpetuate *peace on earth*, and eſtabliſh perfect harmony and *good will among men* be more conveniently taught than in compoſed and peaceable times? The Chriſtian religion was not to be propagated by the ſword, and forcibly obtruded upon men by violent and ſanguinary means; but was to be calmly addreſſed to their underſtandings and gain upon their belief only by the brightneſs of evidence and the ſtrength of argument and perſuaſion: and therefore that age was moſt proper for its firſt publication; when men had moſt leiſure to ſift and examin, and view it in every light. Far from this open undeſigning way is the practice of falſe teachers, and pretenders to divine inſpiration. They love to fiſh in troubled waters, they uſually broach their doctrins, when mens heads are too much buſied and diſtracted with other affairs, to be able diſtinctly to conſider them and beware of their tendency, and will rather come into any meaſures than be at the trouble of arguing and diſputing againſt them. Thus the impoſtor of the Eaſt and impoſtor of the Weſt took that opportunity of ſetting up their pretenſions, when Chriſtendom was rent into numberleſs hereſies and ſchiſms; and no wonder they found an eaſy prey of a weakened and divided people. The doctrin of Mohammed and of the Pope's ſupremacy both ſprung up in the ſame year, both were propagated by the ſame methods, and the ſucceſs of both was greatly owing to the diſorder and confuſion of the times. But the Church of Chriſt, like the temple of Solomon, was to be built in times of peace, and "without the noiſe of axes "and hammers," (1 Kings VI. 7.) that is, without violence and confuſion. And beſides this there was a farther advantage. For the Roman empire being thus ſettled, and a free and open commerce maintained between the moſt diſtant nations, the miniſters and embaſſadors of Chriſt might with more facility bear their glad tidings from city to city, and gain admittence into thoſe countries whoſe ports and harbours would have been inacceſſible in times of war and tumult.

The conſequence of peace is a ſpirit of litterature and politeneſs; and as the Auguſtan age was perhaps the moſt peaceful and glorious of all others, ſo was it of all others the moſt *learned* and *inlightened*. The Romans were not only maſters of all polite learning themſelves, but refined and poliſhed other nations too: wherever they eſtabliſhed their empire, they planted arts and ſciences; and the increaſe of the former was naturally followed with a proportionable improvement of the latter. The Greek and Latin languages were then, as I may ſay, the current languages of the world; and the ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament, having been ſeveral years before tranſlated into Greek, were now become more generally known, and were an excellent preparative for the doctrin of Chriſt, as well as uſeful means and inſtruments in propagating the goſpel throughout the Gentile world. The hiſtory of that age is the moſt known, the moſt read and ſtudied of any in the whole annals of time; and that age therefore was moſt properly choſen for the great work of our redemption, the fuller and clearer accounts of which were tranſmitted to us, the more and greater reaſons we ſhould have to admire and adore it. Men are apt to ſuſpect thoſe relations, which come down to them from dark and fabulous ages; and had our Lord appeared in ſuch an age, the Chriſtian religion muſt have ſtood merely upon the credit of its own writers, and we ſhould have loſt ſeveral collateral evidences for its truth and certainty, which we now draw even from Greek and Roman authors. This is a ſingular advantage, which the Chriſtian religion enjoys over that of the Jews. None of the Heathen hiſtorians are nigh ſo ancient as Moſes, ſo that we cannot have any coæval teſtimonies to confirm the truth of the miracles and other occurrences recorded in his books: but now ſeveral eminent Roman, and Jewiſh, and Greek writers being contemporary with the firſt Chriſtian fathers, the goſpel hiſtory receives new ſtrength and light from their atteſtation. The Roman empire being thus in its full glory, and wit and learning advanced to the higheſt pitch, how unlikely a time was it for any impoſture to ſpread and ſettle in the world, when men were ſo critical and knowing as to be able, ſo prying and inquiſitive as to be willing, to weigh and diſpute its pretenſions? Several falſe Meſſiahs,

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we know, were about that time detected and defeated in their unjuſt attempts; and had the character of Jeſus been the ſame with theirs, the ſame without doubt would have been his ſucceſs. Impoſtures thrive and ſucceed beſt in rude illitterate times; and where is leaſt learning and knowlege, there commonly is moſt faith and credulity. When Mohammed ſet up his new doctrin at Mecca, the Arabians were ſunk in the loweſt ignorance; there was not one perſon in all the place who could write or read, as the moſt able hiſtorians (4) inform us: and no wonder the groſſeſt religion could impoſe upon the groſſeſt underſtandings. In like manner, the Romiſh ſuperſtitions crept into the Church, in the moſt dark and barbarous ages ſince the coming of Chriſt; when a Gothic taſte and Gothic manners prevailed in the weſtern world, and men were never leſs knowing, and never more credulous; when believing was counted the only merit, and ignorance was termed the mother of devotion. Thus have theſe two twin-brothers in impoſture, like the ſuttle enemy in the parable, ſown their *tares* while men *ſlept:* and their followers have ever ſince cheriſhed that ignorance under which they firſt grew and floriſhed, abſolutely forbidding the uſe of reaſon in religion, and refuſing to bring their principles to a fair impartial trial and examination. But the religion of Jeſus made not any advantages of mens ignorance and credulity. It preſented itſelf naked before the wits and ſages of Athens, and withſtood the power and policy of the Roman magiſtrates, and the ſuttlety and malice of the Jewiſh Sanhedrim. It called upon men openly to try and examin it to the uttermoſt; and to be believed and embraced, it needed only to be known and underſtood.

Beſides all this, ſundry other leſſer circumſtances conſpired, each of which conſidered ſingly may perhaps weigh but little, yet ſeveral of them laid in the ſcale together are of great moment in our inquiry. For inſtance. The Meſſiah was to be born at Bethlehem; and what likelihood was there of its coming to paſs, ſince Mary the mother of our Lord lived at Nazareth ſome diſtance from Bethlehem? One cannot imagin that ſhe would take a journey when big with child and in a

(4) See Prideaux.

weak condition. But behold how wonderfully the ſtate of affairs was at that time diſpoſed to bring about this event! The Jews are come under the dominion of the Romans, Auguſtus orders an enrolment of all his ſubjects, Joſeph and Mary repair to Bethlehem to be enrolled according to their tribe and family, and there ſhe bringeth forth her firſt-born ſon. (Luke II. 7.) But this there was occaſion for inſiſting upon more at large in the foregoing diſſertation.—Again. The Meſſiah was to ſuffer crucifixion at Jeruſalem, a puniſhment not preſcribed by the law of Moſes: and how was it probable the Meſſiah ſhould die at Jeruſalem, yet die in a manner contrary to the cuſtom of the Jews? But in that age this was eaſy, which in another was impracticable. For there was a Roman governour then reſident in Judea; into his hands Jeſus is delivered, and is put to death after the faſhion of the Roman ſlaves.—Once more. Every Roman governour was obliged to ſend to Rome an account of the affairs tranſacted within his own province, and theſe accounts were preſerved in tables as the public acts of the government. Agreeably to this cuſtom Pontius Pilate wrote the acts of his government, and therein made particular mention of our Saviour. Now this was adding a very public and very ſolemn teſtimony to the principal matters of fact contained in the goſpel; ſuch a teſtimony as could not have been given but juſt in that age, while Jeruſalem ſtood and Judea was a part of the Roman empire. Theſe acts indeed are now loſt and buried in the ruins of time; but the primitive fathers made great uſe of them, and often appealed to them in their apologies for the Chriſtian religion. This reflection might be run out into a great length, and various inſtances collected to ſhow the fitneſs of that age above all others, eſpecially by thoſe who are any way converſant in the hiſtory of thoſe times. It may ſuffice to have given the hint and leave it to be improved by you at your leiſure.

Let us lay together what hath been ſaid.—If we could not give any account of this matter, yet ought we implicitly to acquieſce in it and thankfully adore it. But ſome account of it we can give ourſelves, enough to make us admire it, though not fully and adequately to comprehend it. The Son of God was not to come into the world but upon neceſſity,

neceſſity, and it was fitting that neceſſity ſhould appear before he came. The world was to be prepared and diſpoſed beforehand for his reception. It was proper that ſeveral heralds in ſeveral ages ſhould go before him to give notice of his entry, that ſo there might be no miſtake of his perſon when he did enter. He came into the world when the the time appointed by the prophets was *fulfilled*, and when there was an univerſal expectation of him: when the Roman empire was eſtabliſhed ſo that men had leiſure to try every new religion, and when wit and learning were at the highth, ſo that they had parts and abilities to do it: when there was the greateſt convenience of propagating the goſpel to times preſent, and of tranſmitting it in writing to times future. And beſides all this there was a wonderful concurrence of perſons and things, conſpiring to complete the deſigns of providence by unheeded unſuſpected methods.

What now is the reſult of this diſcourſe?—We may from hence perceive, how admirable how adorable a work the incarnation of the Son of God is, ſince one little circumſtance of it, *the time*, carries in it ſuch plain and evident marks of the Deity! How wonderful muſt be the contrivance of the whole, when only a part preſents us with ſo many wonders! Some reaſons we have offered to ſhow the wiſdom of providence in thus ordering the times and the ſeaſons; and without doubt there are better reaſons than any we have yet ſeen, or can even imagin. What is finite can never perfectly apprehend the ſchemes and actions of what is infinite. (Ecclus XVI. 20.) "No heart can think "worthily of theſe things, and who is able to conceive his ways!"

We may from hence alſo be led to conclude that every perſon is brought into the world at that point of time, which is moſt proper for himſelf in particular and for mankind in general. Such, remarkably ſuch, was the caſe of our Saviour, and what we have ſeen verified in this one inſtance, we may imagin to hold alike good in all. It is evident the Cæſars and Alexanders, the Plato's and Cicero's, the great geniuſes in arts and arms, are raiſed up at ſuch times and with ſuch circumſtances, as they may beſt anſwer the wiſe ends and purpoſes of providence: and the ſame, I believe, is no leſs true, though leſs conſpicu-

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ous indeed in private perſons. Every man hath his part to act in this theatre of the world, and then entereth on the ſtage of life, and then maketh his exit, when it ſuiteth beſt with the general deſign of the great drama of providence.

Finally we may from hence learn to magnify and adore the wiſdom of God in all his tranſactions with men, and from the things which we can comprehend be taught to reverence thoſe which ſurpaſs our comprehenſion. We plainly diſcover infinite wiſdom and goodneſs in what lieth within the compaſs of our knowlege, and why ſhould we not think as well of what is above and beyond it? The ſame good providence ruleth in both, only in the one we ſee it more clearly in the other more obſcurely. (Rev. XV. 3.) " Great and marvelous are thy works, " Lord God Almighty; juſt and true are thy ways, Thou King of " Saints."

DISSERTATION VII.

On the NAMES JESUS and CHRIST.

IT was the cuſtom with the Jews to give names to their children at the time of their circumciſion, as we Chriſtians do at the time of their baptiſm: and accordingly when our Saviour was circumciſed, (Luke II. 21.) " his name was called Jeſus, which was ſo named of the angel " before he was conceived in the womb." In ancient times they were very curious in their impoſition of names, and generally gave ſuch as denoted ſomething of the character, of the circumſtances and qualifications of the perſon.

Thus when Eve bare a ſon after the death of Abel, " ſhe called his " name *Seth*," that is *appointed*, (Gen. IV. 25.) " For God ſaid ſhe " hath

" hath *appointed* me another ſeed inſtead of Abel whom Cain ſlew." When Jacob was born " his hand took hold on Eſau's heel," (Gen. XXV. 26.) and therefore " his name was called *Jacob*" that is *ſupplanter:* and Eſau might very well ſay (XXVII. 36.) " Is not he " rightly named *Jacob?* for he hath *ſupplanted* me theſe two times; " he took away my birthright, and behold now he hath taken away " my bleſſing." The twelve patriarchs had likewiſe their names from ſome circumſtances of their birth, as for inſtance when Judah was born; his mother Leah ſaid (Gen. XXIX. 35.) " Now will I praiſe the Lord; " therefore ſhe called his name *Judah*" that is *praiſe. Moſes* is the ſame as *drawn out*; and he was therefore ſo called, becauſe he was (Exod. II. 10.) " drawn out of the water." *Samuel* is the ſame as *aſked of God*; and he was therefore ſo called, (1 Sam. I. 20.) becauſe his mother Hannah had " aſked him of the Lord." And in like manner the children of the prophets Iſaiah and Hoſea (Iſ. VIII. Hoſ. I.) had ſuch ſignificative names given them, that they might be for types, " for ſigns and for wonders in Iſrael." The import of the name *John* is *God hath had compaſſion* or *given grace or favor*; and what name could be more proper for him, who was deſigned to be the forerunner of the Meſſiah?

We may be certain therefore, that the name of the Son of God was not given without particular reaſon, and eſpecially ſince it was given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. There are two names by which he is uſually called *Jeſus* and *Chriſt*, the one is his proper name, the other the name of his office; and it will be neceſſary to ſay ſomething upon each of them. There is not a ſingle circumſtance relating to our Saviour, that hath not ſome end or deſign in it. His very *names*, we ſhall ſee, will furniſh us with ſeveral uſeful reflections.

I. As to the name *Jeſus*, it ſeemeth to have been a pretty common name among the Jews. The author of that excellent book Eccleſiaſticus (ſee Prologue) was Jeſus the ſon of Sirach who was the ſon of another Jeſus. There is " a Jew, whoſe name was Barjeſus," that is the ſon of Jeſus, mentioned in the Acts of the Apoſtles: (XIII. 6.) There

is " a Jeſus who was alſo called Juſtus," mentioned in the Epiſtle to the Coloſſians. (IV. 11.) And we read of ſeveral of that name in Joſephus and other Jewiſh writers. It is therefore ſaid by St. Matthew (I. 16.) " Jeſus who is called Chriſt," to diſtinguiſh him from others. The name is the ſame with *Joſhua*, as appears plainly from the tranſlation of the Seventy, where *Joſhua* is always rendered by *Jeſus*, and from two paſſages in the New Teſtament where *Jeſus* is uſed for *Joſhua*; once by St. Stephen in the Acts of the Apoſtles, (VII. 45.) " The tabernacle which our fathers brought in with Jeſus" that is with *Joſhua*, " into the poſſeſſion of the Gentiles;" and again by the author of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews, (IV. 8.) " If Jeſus," that is *Joſhua*, " had given them reſt, then would he not afterward have ſpoken of " another day." So that the name is evidently the ſame with Joſhua, and this I conceive to have been one reaſon why the name was given to our Saviour.

For Joſhua was a remarkable type of our Saviour, and the ſimilitude or rather ſameneſs of names might lead men to conſider the reſemblance and congruity of perſons and characters. It is well known that the land of Canaan was a type of heaven; and as Joſhua was the captain of ſalvation to conduct the people of God into the one, ſo Jeſus is the captain of ſalvation to conduct the people of God into the other. As Joſhua began his office at the banks of the river Jordan; ſo Jeſus was baptized in Jordan, and there likewiſe entered upon his office. As Joſhua ſelected twelve men out of the people to carry over Jordan twelve ſtones for a memorial; ſo Jeſus choſe twelve Apoſtles for the foundation-ſtones of the new Jeruſalem. As Joſhua ſaved the harlot Rahab and her family; ſo Jeſus ſaved Mary Magdalen and others. It is well known that the circumciſion of the *fleſh* was typical of the circumciſion of the *heart*; and as Joſhua was the miniſter of the one by renewing that ceremony; ſo Jeſus was the miniſter of the other ". in " the ſpirit and not in the letter, (Rom. II. 29.) whoſe praiſe is not of " men but of God." Several other memorable circumſtances of reſemblance there are between them, but theſe are ſufficient to ſhow how

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Joſhua was a type of Jeſus, and how fitly therefore the name of the one was given to the other.

But there was a farther reaſon for the impoſition of this name. The name Joſhua or Jeſus ſignifies a *Saviour*, as it is ſaid of Joſhua in Eccleſiaſticus, (XLVI. 1.) that "according to his name he was made "great for the ſaving of the elect of God." And this was the reaſon why the name was given to our Saviour, the very reaſon aſſigned by the angel himſelf; (Matt. I. 21.) "Thou ſhalt call his name Je-"ſus, for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins." There have been princes and emperors, heroes and lawgivers, who have been dignified with the title of *Saviours*; but Jeſus is our Saviour by way of excellency and eminency, in a manner wherein none other ever was or ever can be. "Neither is there ſalvation in any other," as St. Peter ſpeaketh, (Acts IV. 12.) "for there is none other name under heaven given "among men, whereby we muſt be ſaved." He is our Saviour by publiſhing the goſpel, and ſhowing us the way to ſalvation. He is our Saviour by enabling us with his grace to walk in it. He is our Saviour by delivering us from our worſt enemies, and reſcuing us from ſin and miſery through the ſacrifice of himſelf. He is our Saviour by triumphing over death and hell, and crowning with everlaſting happineſs all thoſe who come unto God by him. Upon any of theſe accounts ſingly he hath a juſt right to the title of Saviour, and much more upon all of them taken together.

So many reaſons there were for the name of Jeſus: and the prophecy of Iſaiah, which ſeemeth to contradict what hath been advanced, was yet hereby fulfilled. It was foretold by that prophet that the name ſhould be "Emmanuel or God with us:" but it was not intended, that the name ſhould conſiſt of thoſe individual ſyllables. For it was not unuſual among the Jews to ſay, that a perſon ſhould be called by ſuch or ſuch a name, when it was not deſigned to be his real name, but only to denote his office and qualifications. When Iſaiah propheſied of the Meſſiah (IX. 6.) "His name ſhall be called Wonderful, "Counſellor, The mighty God, The Father of the future age, The "Prince of peace," it was not meant that he ſhould be commonly

known and diſtinguiſhed by any or all of theſe names, but only that he ſhould act conformably to theſe titles, and fulfil all theſe characters. In like manner when the ſame Iſaiah foretold (VII. 14.) "Behold, a "virgin ſhall conceive, and bear a ſon, and ſhall call his name Em-"manuel," the meaning was not that this ſhould be his proper name by which ſhe ſhould generally be called, but only that it ſhould be of that import and ſignification. And ſo indeed it is, for *God with us* is our *Saviour*, and our *Saviour* is *God with us*. It is plain St. Matthew conceived Jeſus and Emmanuel, to be two names of the ſame ſignification, otherwiſe he would hardly have expreſſed himſelf in this manner; (I. 20, &c.) "Joſeph thou ſon of David, fear not to take unto "thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the "Holy Ghoſt; And ſhe ſhall bring forth a ſon, and thou ſhalt call "his name Jeſus, for he ſhall ſave his people from their ſins: Now "all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was ſpoken of "the Lord by the prophet ſaying, Behold a virgin ſhall be with child, "and ſhall bring forth a ſon, and they ſhall call his name Emmanuel; "which being interpreted is God with us."

II. As to the name *Chriſt*, it is the ſame with *Meſſiah* (Meſſiah according to the Hebrew, Chriſt according to the Greek) and both of them ſignify in plain Engliſh *anointed*. Now the perſons who were anointed under the law, were anointed for ſome ſpecial end and ſervice, as their prophets, their prieſts, and their kings. And in each of theſe reſpects Jeſus is properly intitled to the ſtile of the *Chriſt* or *anointed*.

1. Jeſus may properly be called the *Chriſt* or anointed, as he is our *prophet*. He is "that prophet who was to come into the world," (John VI. 14.) ſo particularly foretold and ſo much expected. "The "Spirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe he hath anointed me to preach "the goſpel to the poor," ſaith the prophet Iſaiah: (Luke IV. 18, 21.) and "this day," ſaith our Saviour, in the ſynagogue at Nazareth, "is this ſcripture fulfilled in your ears." His life, his doctrin, his miracles all proclaim him to be a prophet of the firſt magnitude. And if it was ſaid of his forerunner John Baptiſt, (Matt. XI. 9.) much

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more may it be ſaid of him, that he was " a prophet and more than " a prophet."

2. Jeſus may properly be called the *Chriſt* or anointed, as he is our *prieſt*. (Heb. V. 1.) " For every high-prieſt taken from among men " is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer " both gifts and ſacrifices for ſins:" But Jeſus (Eph. V. 2.) " hath " given himſelf for us an offering and a ſacrifice to God for a ſweet- " ſmelling ſavor." And after he had offered up himſelf a ſacrifice for our ſins, " he entered not," (Heb. IX. 24.) like other prieſts, " into " the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, " but into heaven itſelf now to appear in the preſence of God for us." And becauſe the Levitical prieſthood deſcended by ſucceſſion from father to ſon, but Melchiſedek was a prieſt of whom there is recorded neither predeceſſor nor ſucceſſor; He is therefore ſaid to be a prieſt " not after the order of Aaron, (Heb. VII. 11, 17, 25.) but a prieſt " for ever, after the order of Melchiſedek, ſeeing he ever liveth to " make interceſſion for us."

3. Jeſus may properly be called the *Chriſt* or anointed, as he is our *king*. We obſerved that he was a prieſt " after the order of Melchiſedek," and Melchiſedek was both a *prieſt* and a *king*. It was the prediction of Iſaiah, (IX. 6.) " Unto us a child is born, unto us a ſon is " given, and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulder; and his " name ſhall be called Wonderful, Counſellor, The mighty God, The " everlaſting Father," or the rather " The Father of the future age, " The Prince of peace." It was likewiſe the promiſe of the Angel, before he was conceived in the womb, (Luke I. 32, 33.). " He ſhall be great " and ſhall be called the Son of the Higheſt, and the Lord God ſhall " give unto him the throne of his father David, and he ſhall reign " over the houſe of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there ſhall " be no end." According to theſe prophecies (Eph. I. 20, 21.) " He " is now ſet down at the right hand of God in the heavenly places, " far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, " and every name that is named not only in this world, but alſo in that " which is to come." (1 Cor. XV. 25, 26.) " For he muſt reign till

" he hath put all enemies under his feet; the laſt enemy that ſhall " be deſtroyed is death." And ſo He is and ever will be acknowleged (Rev. XIX. 16.) " King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

It is true we do not read any where, that Jeſus was ever anointed with oil, as the prophets, the prieſts, and the kings were under the law: and ſo neither were the patriarchs nor king Cyrus, (Pſal. CV. 15. Iſ. XLV. 1.) and yet in ſcripture they are called *Chriſts* or *anointed.* But he was anointed, though not with the oil of unction, yet with, what the oil of unction typified and repreſented, the influx of the Spirit. " God anointed him," as St. Peter expreſſeth it, (Acts X. 38.) " with the Holy Ghoſt and with power." He was anointed by the Holy Ghoſt at his conception, and ſanctified from the womb, as the angel ſaid unto his mother, (Luke I. 39.) " The " Holy Ghoſt ſhall come upon thee, and the power of the Higheſt " ſhall overſhadow thee; therefore alſo that holy thing which ſhall " be born of thee ſhall be called the Son of God." He was again anointed at his baptiſm, (Luke III. 22.) when " the Holy Ghoſt " deſcended viſibly upon him, and a voice came from heaven which " ſaid, Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleaſed." The Baptiſt therefore (John I. 34.) " bare record that this is the Son of " God," and ſaid afterwards (III. 34.) " God giveth not the Spirit " by meaſure unto him."

Enough hath been ſaid to ſhow the fitneſs and propriety of the two names: but we may make ſome practical reflections upon them, as well as theſe which are altogether ſpeculative.

1. He hath the name *Jeſus*, as he is our *Saviour*: and can we hear this name without feeling all inward joy and gratitude, without expreſſing all outward homage and veneration? It is ſaid in ſcripture, (Phil. II. 9, 10.) that " God hath highly exalted him and given " him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jeſus " every knee ſhould bow of things in heaven, and things in earth, and " things under the earth." And from hence, I ſuppoſe, we derive the cuſtom of bowing at the name of Jeſus in our Churches: and indeed we can never pay too much reverence to this holy name. But

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it is certain the expreſſion of *bowing the knee* is here nothing more than a metaphor, being applied not only to men to *things in earth*, but likewiſe to *things in heaven* and *things under the earth*; and it meaneth, that all intellectual creatures, both angels and devils, men and ſpirits ſhould do homage to the Holy Jeſus: And accordingly "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under "the earth, and ſuch as are in the ſea, and all that are in them," are repreſented in the Revelation (V. 13.) as aſcribing "bleſſing "and honor and glory and power unto Him that ſitteth upon the "throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

The reverence due to this holy name, I conceive, hath been the occaſion, that though it was a common name among the Jews, yet it is otherwiſe among us Chriſtians. The names of the greateſt Apoſtles and of the bleſſed Virgin Mother are in familiar uſe among us: but whoever preſumed to name his ſon after the Son of God? There is a certain ſociety indeed that is called by the name of *Jeſus*; but inſtead of dedicating themſelves more immediately to his ſervice, inſtead of acting more conformably to his example, they ſeem ſo far to forget whoſe they are and what they are called, that they have ever ſince their firſt inſtitution been the peſts and incendiaries of Chriſtendom. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they "are the ſons of God:" (Rom. VIII. 14.) as many as are led by the Spirit of Jeſus, they are the ſons of Jeſus. It is to no purpoſe to call themſelves by his name, unleſs they do likewiſe his works. Our Saviour came "not to deſtroy men's lives but to ſave them:" (Luke IX. 56.) but theſe men, as if the deſign of the Chriſtian religion was not to ſave but to kill, have filled all the courts, all the kingdoms of Europe, with plots and intrigues, with perſecutions and murders. I know none of our Saviour's precepts, that they have obſerved, unleſs it be that of being "wiſe as ſerpents;" (Matt. X. 16.) the latter part I am ſure they have neglected of being "harmleſs as doves."

It would be better for them that there had never been ſuch a name; and it will be better for us too, unleſs it have another effect

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and influence upon us. It is almoſt impoſſible to hear the name of a great perſon, and eſpecially of one who hath benefited the world by his inventions or achievements, without ſome degree of gratitude and reverence: and how then ought we to be affected at the mention of Him who hath done and ſuffered ſo much for us, our bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer? The very devils were caſt out of thoſe they poſſeſſed, by virtue of this holy name; and can we be ſuch inſenſible creatures, as not to feel its force and own its influence? Shall we do what in us lieth to unname the bleſſed Jeſus, to make our Saviour no Saviour to us, and turn our ſalvation into our deſtruction? Nay but as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh, (Col. III. 17.) "whatſoever ye do in "word or deed, do all *in the name of the Lord Jeſus*, giving thanks "to God even the Father by him."

2. He hath the name *Chriſt*, as he was deſigned by providence for ſuch offices and functions as *prophet*, *prieſt* and *king*: and it was the ſum and ſubſtance of the Apoſtles preaching and doctrin to prove that "Jeſus was the Chriſt." And from *Chriſt* cometh the name of *Chriſtians*, begun firſt at Antioch in the days of the Apoſtles, and continued ever ſince all the world over. For as Jeſus was anointed by the Spirit, and therefore is the Chriſt; ſo we are in ſome ſenſe anointed and ſome meaſure of the Spirit deſcends to us. "Now he "which ſtabliſheth us in Chriſt, and hath anointed us is God" in the words of St. Paul; (2 Cor. I. 21.) and in the words of St. John, (1 John II. 20, 27.) "We have an unction from the holy one," and "the anointing which we have received of him abideth in us." The very name therefore of a *Chriſtian* infers an obligation to holineſs of life. It will be an eternal reproach to us to be called *Chriſtians*, and yet live like Heathens. Let us remember, "that the "foundation or covenant of God ſtandeth ſure," as the Apoſtle declares, (2 Tim. II. 19.) "having this ſeal" or inſcription, on God's part "the Lord knoweth them that are his," and on our part "Let "every one that nameth the name of Chriſt depart from iniquity."

We are not only called Chriſtians in the general, but each of us hath likewiſe his particular Chriſtian name given at baptiſm, to remind

mind him of his Chriſtian profeſſion, as often as it is mentioned. And theſe names are uſually borrowed (and very properly borrowed) from the Old or New Teſtament, the better to incite us to tread in the ſteps of thoſe holy men and women, thoſe heroes and heroines in the faith, who have gone before us; that ſo following them in their good works, we may partake with them in their heavenly rewards.

As Chriſtians certainly we ſhould conſider what are our duties to Chriſt, and not, while we profeſs him with our lips, deny him in our lives. As He is our prophet, we ſhould hear him; as He is our prieſt, we ſhould honor him; as He is our king, we ſhould obey him. As He is our prophet and hath revealed the will of God, we ſhould rejoice in his glorious light, and follow him whereſoever he leadeth us. As He is our prieſt, and hath given himſelf a ſacrifice, and now intercedes for us, we ſhould place all our hopes of ſalvation in his merits, and never diſhonor his mediatorſhip by applying to other mediators, ſaints or angels. As He is our king and hath all power in heaven and in earth, we ſhould live as becomes his ſubjects ourſelves, and endevor to promote his kingdom all we can in others. As He is our prophet, we may ſay with St. Peter, (John VI. 68.) "Lord to whom "ſhall we go? thou haſt the words of eternal life." As He is our prieſt, we may ſay with St. Paul, (Heb. IV. 16.) "Let us therefore "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy "and find grace to help in time of need." As He is our king we may ſay with the angels and elders in the Revelation, (V. 12.) "Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain, to receive power, and riches, "and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honor, and glory, and bleſſing." Therefore Bleſſed Jeſu Chriſt; thou the Saviour ſave us from our ſins; thou the Anointed give us of thy unction the Holy Spirit; as prophet, inſtruct us in thy will; as prieſt, intercede for us; as king, crown us with thy glory; that ſo we and thy whole Church may be (Rev. I. 5, 6.) "waſhed from our ſins in thy blood, and be made "kings and prieſts unto God and the Father, to whom be glory "and dominion for ever and ever. Amen!

D. I. S.

DISSERTATION VIII.

On our SAVIOUR's PRIVATE LIFE.

IT is remarkable that the evangeliſts, who are pretty large and copious, in relating our Saviour's public actions, are yet very ſhort and ſparing in giving the hiſtory of his private life, before he entered upon his office of teaching and inſtructing the people. St. Luke inlargeth the moſt upon this part of ſacred ſtory, and he hath in few words (II. 51, 52.) comprehended all the account that he hath thought fit to give us of our Saviour from the age of twelve to thirty. For in the verſes preceding we have an account of his going up to Jeruſalem and diſputing with the doctors there, when he was only "twelve years old;" and in the chapter following we have an account of his baptiſm, when "he began to be about thirty years of "age," and was now deſigning to enter upon his public miniſtry; ſo that all the hiſtory of the intermediate time is compriſed in theſe few words, "And he went down with them," (his parents) "and "came to Nazareth, and was ſubject unto them; and Jeſus in-"creaſed in wiſdom and ſtature, and in favor with God and man." From hence therefore we may take occaſion firſt to inquire for what reaſons we may ſuppoſe the evangeliſts did not think fit to give a more particular account of our Saviour's private life; and ſecondly to make ſome reflections upon that general account which is given of our Saviour's private life, as to the *time*, and the *place*, and the *manner* of it.

I. In the firſt place let us inquire for what reaſons we may ſuppoſe the evangeliſts did not think fit to give a more particular account of our Saviour's private life. It is certain the generality of mankind are very fond of ſuch ſort of relations; and when any perſon hath diſtin-

diſtinguiſhed himſelf to uncommon advantage in public, we are curious to learn ſomething of his private character, what hath been his education, and what are his domeſtic qualities as well as thoſe of a more political and ſplendid nature, how he demeans himſelf towards his friends and companions, and how he paſſeth his time in ſolitude and retirement as well as how he appears in the moſt conſpicuous ſcenes and ſtations of life. But the writers of our Saviour's hiſtory have done very little towards gratifying our curioſity in theſe reſpects; and for this very reaſon perhaps becauſe they are matters of curioſity more than uſe. Our Saviour's private life was certainly not of that conſequence and concern to mankind as his preaching, and miracles, and other public actions, which were wrought to evince the truth of religion and accompliſh our ſalvation.

It was fitting therefore that theſe public tranſactions ſhould be inlarged upon more than any private occurrences; and if both had been inlarged upon, the goſpel had been rendered too voluminous. As it is, ſeveral facts are omitted, which ſeem to be more material than the hiſtory of our Saviour's private life. St. John expreſly aſſerts in the concluſion of his goſpel, (XX. 30.) that "many other "ſigns truly did Jeſus in the preſence of his diſciples which are not "written in this book;" and again with a remarkable hyperbole, (XXI. 25.) "There are alſo many other things which Jeſus did, the "which if they ſhould be written every one, I ſuppoſe that even the "world itſelf could not contain the books that ſhould be written." If ſo many miracles and other actions of our Saviour's public miniſtry were omitted for the ſake of brevity, we cannot wonder that a more particular account is not given of the circumſtances of his private life, which were not attended with ſuch demonſtrations of power, and were not ſo neceſſary to confirm our faith. The evangeliſts, we may preſume, ſelected ſuch paſſages as were moſt memorable and affecting, moſt uſeful and conducive to faith and practice; and if they had entered into a more minute detail of leſſer affairs, they would have exceeded the limits and proportions of a hiſtory that was

deſigned for general uſe, and was written to be read and known and remembered by all men.

The evangeliſts in their manner of writing ſeem to have complied with our Saviour's intentions in his manner of living. He would not have lived ſo long in ſecret, if he had deſired to be known openly; but whatſoever was neceſſary to be known for the confirmation of his divine miſſion was public enough, and none of theſe things were "done in a corner." And is not ſuch an example of modeſty and reſerve and love of privacy in our Saviour ſufficient to abaſh and confound the pride and vanity of the authors of thoſe crude pieces called *memoirs*, and eſpecially of thoſe who think themſelves conſiderable enough to write their own memoirs and the hiſtories of their own times, wherein they themſelves are all and do all? The truth is, they are in love with themſelves, and imagin that all the world muſt be ſo too; and therefore are ſo full of their own ſtory, enter into all the particulars of their lives and fortunes, and never conſider, that what may be of importance to themſelves may yet be very trifling and very tedious to others.

This vanity is inſufferable, but worſe and more inſufferable is the religious pride and vanity of thoſe preſumptuous enthuſiaſts, who write the journals of their own lives actions and travels, compare themſelves to prophets and apoſtles, boaſt of viſions and revelations, aſcribe every thing they ſay and do to the immediate operation of God's Holy Spirit, without any proof or exhibition of it but their own confident aſſertions, applaud themſelves and their own ſect alone as the elect of God, and reprobate and condemn all others. Theſe are hiſtorians only of their own ſuperſtition, enthuſiaſm and blaſphemy, beginning in folly, and ending in madneſs.

It is not the part of an hiſtorian who deſerves the name, to relate all actions and events indifferently. Some things are not worth relating, but are better forgotten than remembered; and others, which may be worth remembering, are better expreſſed conciſely in general terms than deſcribed particularly in all their circumſtances: and a good hiſtorian will diſcover his art and judgment not in ſetting down every

every thing that he knoweth, but in ſingling out ſuch things, as will be moſt uſeful for poſterity to know, and will make the moſt laſting impreſſion upon future ages as well as the preſent. If this rule had been better obſerved, our modern hiſtories would have reſembled more the claſſical writings of the ancients, and would not have been ſo voluminous, for their bulk alone is enough to deter common readers, and it is a great expenſe of money to purchaſe them, but a greater expenſe of time to peruſe them. A proper brevity contributes greatly to the dignity of hiſtory. The ſhorteſt narrations are generally the moſt ſpirituous and lively. Prolixity and dulneſs commonly go hand in hand together.

We may ſuppoſe therefore that the evangeliſts had ſome regard to the beauty of the compoſition as well as to the importance of the matter in giving ſo ſuccinct an account of our Saviour's private life: and if we inquire what is the reaſon uſually that maketh men ſuch lovers and readers of ſecret hiſtory, I am afraid we ſhall find that our fondneſs for it may be reſolved into our fondneſs for ſcandal; and ſecret hiſtory would reliſh very little, if that was not the ſeaſoning. But his very enemies could not fix any real ſcandal on him, (1 Pet. II. 22.) "who did no "ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth." The younger part of a life, led in a low eſtate, in retirement and innocence, could afford little variety or entertainment to the generality of readers. Not that it would have been any diſadvantage to our Saviour, if every ſingle paſſage and circumſtance had been related; his actions could all bear the ſevereſt examination, and it was not with him as with others, whoſe public characters are highly famed and commended, but a veil is beſt thrown over their private life. But a particular relation of theſe things would not have been of ſuch advantage to the readers as other parts of the ſacred ſtory, and therefore a general account only is given of them, and if a larger account is ſtill deſired, that is one of the beauties of good writing to ſay ſo much as to make men wiſh that you had ſaid more; and a general account leaveth more room for our own private thoughts and reflections.

II. Let us then, as we propoſed in the ſecond place, make ſome reflections upon that general account which is given of our Saviour's private life, as to the *time* and the *place* and the *manner* of it.

1. As to the *time*, our Saviour "began to be about thirty years of "age" before he entered upon his public miniſtry. He was not forward to aſſume a public character, he would not ſet up too early for a preacher of righteouſneſs and reformer of manners. Not but he was ſufficiently qualified before, he had diſcovered his abilities by diſputing with the Jewiſh doctors when he was only "twelve years old, (Luke "II. 42, 47.) and all that heard him were aſtoniſhed at his under-"ſtanding and anſwers:" but it is one thing to be admired and another to be obeyed, and he might think perhaps that his youth might in this reſpect diſcredit his doctrin, the addition of a few years might gain him more favorable attention, and the gravity and dignity of a public character would better become him. He waited too till the ſeaſon was ripe and the opportunity proper to declare himſelf, till the Baptiſt had in ſome meaſure prepared the way before him; for John as the morning ſtar was to go before and Jeſus was to riſe afterwards as the ſun. He entered upon his public miniſtry at the age of *thirty* particularly, becauſe by the law of the nation and cuſtom of the religion no prieſt was to miniſter or prophet was to preach before that age; and in this reſpect as well as in others (Matt. III. 15.) "it became him to "fulfil all righteouſneſs." The two great types of Chriſt, Joſeph at the age of thirty began his government in Egypt, and David began his reign at the ſame age. At the ſame age his forerunner John Baptiſt alſo began his miniſtry; and Jeſus, who was to fulfil all types and figures, at that age therefore began preaching of the goſpel.

Some may wiſh perhaps, that the evangelical diſpenſation ſince had in this reſpect been more conformed to the levitical, that this age had been made the ſtandard, and none were admitted to preach the goſpel ſooner, and eſpecially ſince there hath been no want but rather abundance of laborers in the harveſt. At leaſt this example of our Saviour may teach us humility and modeſty, not to be too forward and eager to preſs into the public ſervice of the Church, but to prepare ourſelves

firſt,

firſt, and improve our talents before we think of diſplaying them, and (Eccleſ. V. 1.) " be more ready to hear than to give the ſacrifice of " fools, for they conſider not that they do evil." The difficulties and dangers of the miniſterial office are ſo many and ſo great, ſuch knowlege is required in controverſial practical and caſuiſtical divinity, ſuch profound ſkill in the holy ſcriptures, ſuch prudence and diſcretion in the affairs of the world, ſuch exemplary virtue and holineſs of life, and our account will be ſo much larger than other mens not only for our own ſouls but for the ſouls of thoſe committed to our charge, that St. James (III. 1.) made it a matter of exhortation, " My brethren be " not many maſters, knowing that we ſhall receive the greater con- " demnation :" and how muſt all theſe difficulties and dangers be increaſed and multiplied, by our coming too young and unexperienced to the altar. Age is implied in the very name of a *preſbyter* or *elder*, and every miniſter of the goſpel ought to be in proportion, as well as a biſhop, (1 Tim. III. 6.) " not a novice leſt being lifted up with pride " he fall into the condemnation of the devil."

But it is not only wrong in religious matters, but in all other affairs it is a diſadvantage to a man to be introduced into public life and public buſineſs too early, and is like forcing of fruit that hath not the ſame ſpirit and flavor as at the proper ſeaſon. There is nothing more diſagreeable than that pertneſs of youth which is a compoſition of vivacity and emptineſs. Time mellows and improves wit and parts, as it does generous wines. It is a very good rule of life that hath been laid down by ſome perſons of worth and eminence, to qualify themſelves for public employments till the age of thirty, and from thirty to ſixty to act the beſt part they can on this ſtage of the world, and after ſixty to retire from the noiſe and hurry of buſineſs, in order to ſettle and compoſe their ſouls for eternity. Not that extraordinary great geniuſes can be tied up or limited to any rules. They are an exception to all rules; and there may be young men with all the ſagacity and penetration of age, as there may be old men with all the ſpirit and vivacity of youth. Alexander at the age of thirty had overturned the Perſian empire, and Cæſar wept that he had done nothing equally memorable at

the

the ſame age. But inferior geniuſes muſt proceed more regularly, and thoſe who follow any example certainly cannot follow a better example than this of our bleſſed Saviour; and perhaps men's wit and parts may in this reſpect be like trees, thoſe which are of ſlower growth may be of longer continuance. There is certainly a time for preparation, and a time for action, and a time for retirement. "To every thing there "is a ſeaſon, and a time to every purpoſe under the heaven:" (Eccleſ. III. 11.) And every wiſe and good man will endevor as much as he can to be like his Creator, who (as Solomon ſaith) "hath made every thing "beautiful in his time."

2. As to the place of our Saviour's reſidence, the goſpel informs us that it was *Nazareth* a city of Galilee: and Galilee was not only the ſcene of his private life, but he firſt preached his goſpel and performed moſt of his miracles there; he choſe moſt of his apoſtles out of Galilee, and he went into Judea and to Jeruſalem only upon certain occaſions. Galilee lay north of Judea, and was the land of Zebulon and Naphtali; and ſeveral of the Gentiles mixing there with the inhabitants, part of it was called "Galilee of the Gentiles." It was for ſome time ſubject to a different government, and the pronunciation of the natives was ſomewhat different from that of the reſt of Judea. Thus it was ſaid to Peter, (Matt. XXVI. 73.) "Surely thou alſo art "one of them, for thy ſpeech bewrayeth thee;" or as it is in St. Mark (XIV. 70.) "Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean, and "thy ſpeech agreeth thereto:" and as our people are apt to be prejudiced, often unreaſonably prejudiced, againſt the northern inhabitants of the ſame iland, ſo were the Jews againſt their northern neighbours likewiſe of the ſame nation, and the Galileans were deſpiſed as the meaneſt and the worſt of Jews by the Jews themſelves. This very thing was the occaſion of great prejudices againſt our Saviour. "Shall Chriſt come "out of Galilee?" ſaid the people. (John VII. 41.) "Out of Gal-"lilee ariſeth no prophet," ſaid the chief prieſts and phariſees. (ver. 52.) "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" ſaid Nathanael: (I. 46.) and therefore part of the inſcription affixed to the croſs was "Jeſus of Nazareth," as if no good thing could come out of

of Nazareth; and Chriſtians were afterwards called by way of reproach the *ſect of Nazarenes* and *Galileans.*

But ſuch are the counſels of God, that he often chooſes (1 Cor. I. 27, &c.) " the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe, and " the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and baſe things " of the world and things which are deſpiſed, yea and things which " are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no fleſh ſhould glory " in his preſence." This circumſtance of our Saviour's life is the more remarkable, as it was predicted by the Spirit of prophecy. The Meſſiah was to be born indeed at Bethlehem, but the place of his abode was to be in Galilee according to the ancient prophets and prophecies. When the patriarch Jacob upon his death-bed bleſſed his ſons, he ſaid of Naphtali in particular, (Gen. XLIX. 21.) " Naphtali " is a hind let looſe, he giveth goodly words." The land of Naphtali, as it was before-ſaid, was a part of Galilee, and the goſpel is particularly diſtinguiſhed, as " that word which began from Galilee." You read it in St. Peter's ſpeech to Cornelius and his kinſmen and friends. (Acts X. 36, 37.) " The word which God ſent unto the children of Iſrael, " preaching peace by Jeſus Chriſt, (he is Lord of all) That word (I " ſay) you know, which was publiſhed throughout all Judea, and be- " gan from Galilee. The goſpel then was the *good words*, the *good tidings*, which proceeded from *Naphtali*, or the parts of Galilee; and from thence like *a hind let looſe*, ran at large over the face of the earth. It was in alluſion to the ſame bleſſing, that Moſes cried out in his prophetic ſtrain concerning Naphtali, (Deut. XXXIII. 23.) " O Naph- " tali, ſatisfied with favor, and full with the bleſſing of the Lord;" which was fully accompliſhed by the Lord's dwelling ſo much among them.

It is the prophecy of Iſaiah as quoted by St. Matthew, (IV. 15, 16.) " The land of Zabulon and the land of Nephtalim, by the way of the " ſea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which ſat " in darkneſs ſaw great light, and to them which ſat in the region and " ſhadow of death light is ſprung up." St. Matthew is ſpeaking of Jeſus departing into Galilee, and dwelling at Capernaum, and ſaith that hereby,

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But ſuch are the counſels of God, that he often chooſes (1 Cor. I. 27, &c.) " the fooliſh things of the world to confound the wiſe, and " the weak things of the world to confound the mighty, and baſe things " of the world and things which are deſpiſed, yea and things which " are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no fleſh ſhould glory " in his preſence." This circumſtance of our Saviour's life is the more remarkable, as it was predicted by the Spirit of prophecy. The Meſſiah was to be born indeed at Bethlehem, but the place of his abode was to be in Galilee according to the ancient prophets and prophecies. When the patriarch Jacob upon his death-bed bleſſed his ſons, he ſaid of Naphtali in particular, (Gen. XLIX. 21.) " Naphtali " is a hind let looſe, he giveth goodly words." The land of Naphtali, as it was before-ſaid, was a part of Galilee, and the goſpel is particularly diſtinguiſhed, as " that word which began from Galilee." You read it in St. Peter's ſpeech to Cornelius and his kinſmen and friends. (Acts X. 36, 37.) " The word which God ſent unto the children of Iſrael, " preaching peace by Jeſus Chriſt, (he is Lord of all) That word (I " ſay) you know, which was publiſhed throughout all Judea, and be- " gan from Galilee. The goſpel then was the *good words*, the *good tidings*, which proceeded from *Naphtali*, or the parts of Galilee; and from thence like *a hind let looſe*, ran at large over the face of the earth. It was in alluſion to the ſame bleſſing, that Moſes cried out in his prophetic ſtrain concerning Naphtali, (Deut. XXXIII. 23.) " O Naph- " tali, ſatisfied with favor, and full with the bleſſing of the Lord;" which was fully accompliſhed by the Lord's dwelling ſo much among them.

It is the prophecy of Iſaiah as quoted by St. Matthew, (IV. 15, 16.) " The land of Zabulon and the land of Nephtalim, by the way of the " ſea beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which ſat " in darkneſs ſaw great light, and to them which ſat in the region and " ſhadow of death light is ſprung up." St. Matthew is ſpeaking of Jeſus departing into Galilee, and dwelling at Capernaum, and ſaith that hereby

hereby the prophecy of Iſaiah was fulfilled. " Now when Jeſus had " heard that John was caſt into priſon, he departed into Galilee. And " leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt at Capernaum, which is upon " the ſea coaſt, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephtalim: That it " might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by Eſaias the prophet ſaying, " The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephtalim, by the way of " the ſea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; The people which " ſat in darkneſs, ſaw great light; and to them which ſat in the re- " gion and ſhadow of death, light is ſprung up." The ſame Evangeliſt farther informs us, (II. 23.) that Jeſus " came and dwelt in a " city called Nazareth, that it might be fulfilled which was ſpoken by " the prophets, He ſhall be called a Nazarene:" and he is diſtinguiſhed in Iſaiah particularly by the title of *Netſar*, which may ſignify both a *branch* and an *inhabitant* of *Nazareth*. (Iſ. XI. 1, &c.) " There ſhall come a rod out of Jeſſe, and a branch (Netſar or Ne- " zar) ſhall grow out of his roots, and the Spirit of the Lord ſhall reſt " upon him." The word *Netſar*, as (1) Biſhop Chandler obſerves, ſignifies firſt appellatively a branch, a flower or bud; and from thence it paſſed by tranſlation into the proper name of a place, which was ſo denominated from its fruitfulneſs, as much as to ſay, the garden, the flower of Galilee. In Hebrew the town was called Netſar, in Syriac Nazareth.—The uſual word in the prophets for the Meſſiah, and almoſt appropriated to him was *Zemach*, which ſignifies a branch. But the prophet in this place puts the word *Netſar* for *Zemach*, guided as it ſeems by the Spirit of God, to foretel therein the country wherein this bud of David ſhould be nouriſhed; to inſinuate that the Meſſiah ſhould be a *Netſar* on a twofold account, as he ſhould grow out of the ſtock of David, and be educated in the flower of Judea, in Nazareth. Among the Jews, as the Biſhop farther evinces, ſuch a way of writing did prevail; and the like alluſions in the prophets render this interpretation of the place very probable. The late worthy Dr. Hunt of Chriſt-Church Oxford, in a diſcourſe upon this text publiſhed ſince his deceaſe, hath propoſed another interpretation, that our Lord is not barely

(1) See Biſhop Chandler's Defence of Chriſtianity, p. 222, &c.

called

called Ναζαρηνος *a Nazarene*, but Ναζωραιος, which much reſembles the Hebrew participle *Nazûr*, and includes alſo the idea of a *deſpiſed perſecuted* perſon. It was ſpoken by the prophets, by many of the prophets, that the Meſſiah ſhould be a deſpiſed perſecuted perſon; and Jeſus was ſuch a perſon, as well as an inhabitant of Nazareth.

We ſee what a particular providence there was in our Saviour's reſiding in Galilee and dwelling at Nazareth and afterwards at Capernaum: and let us learn from this inſtance to correct our vain prejudices, and not deride or deſpiſe any man on account of his country, nor for the ſake of ſome condemn all without diſtinction. This is certainly a very partial and narrow way of thinking, and ſhoweth evidently that we neither underſtand ourſelves nor mankind as we pretend. Wiſdom and virtue are not like fruits which will thrive only in a particular ſoil, but are the growth of every climate. There may be excellent good men of the worſt country, as there are monſtrous ill men of the beſt. Abraham was called from Ur of the Chaldees, and the father of the faithful, and the friend of God came from a nation of idolaters. The Arabians were ſtrangers and aliens from the commonwealth of Iſrael, and yet Job was born among them, and you ſhall ſcarcely find a more excellent perſon than him among the Iſraelites themſelves. Nothing could be more rude and barbarous than the northern nations, and yet the Getæ had their Zamolxis and the Scythians their Anarchaſis, none of the meaneſt of philoſophers. The Bœotians were counted the dulleſt people of Greece (2), even to a proverb; their air and their intellects were reckoned equally thick and foggy: but yet out of this unpromiſing country aroſe Pindar the ſublimeſt poet, Epaminondas the greateſt general, and Plutarch the wiſeſt philoſopher and hiſtorian of their ſeveral ages. A neighbouring iland hath been made the ſubject of much raillery and deriſion on a like account, but yet may boaſt ſome of the brighteſt wits and of the trueſt original geniuſes who have written in our own or any language. Nay it hath been obſerved, that ſome of the greateſt inventions, as the uſe of gun-powder and print-

(2) Bœotum in craſſo jurares aere natum. Hor.

ing, were produced in times of ignorance and by none of the brighteſt of nations: and how contemptible notions ſoever we may entertain of the manners and buildings of our Gothic anceſtors, yet from them we derive a better conſtitution of government than was ever eſtabliſhed in any of the politeſt ſtates of Greece or Rome. The ſame "God is over all," as the ſame ſun ſhineth upon all; (Acts X. 35.) and "in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteouſ-"neſs is accepted with him."

Laſtly as to the *manner* of our Saviour's living and employing his time in his retirement at Nazareth, we have a ſummary account of it in the words before recited. "He went down with his parents, "and came to Nazareth, and was ſubject unto them." The Son of God, we ſee, was not above fulfilling the offices and relations of private life, but paid all filial duty to thoſe who were his parents in one capacity, though he was their lord and creator in another: and can there be a more powerful leſſon or example of ſubmiſſion and reverence and duty to parents? Surely we cannot think much of paying that tribute of obedience to our parents, which the Son of God paid in the days of his fleſh to him who was only his reputed father. Surely we who are of the ſame human nature, ſubject to the ſame paſſions and liable to the ſame accidents, ought to be thankful for their virtues and to throw a veil over their failings, commiſerate their infirmities and relieve their wants, comfort their old age, and prolong the life that gave life unto ourſelves.

It is a general tradition that our Saviour worked with his father at the trade of a carpenter; and it is very probable as the Jews always brought up their ſons to ſome trade or buſineſs. Our Saviour would never give any countenance or encouragement by his example to ſloth and idleneſs; and in the goſpels he is not only called *the Carpenter's ſon* but *the Carpenter* in the goſpel of St. Mark (VI. 13.) "Is not this the Carpenter the ſon of Mary!" which can imply no leſs I think than that he had worked at the trade himſelf. Surely then we can have no reaſon any of us to be aſhamed of manual trades and operations, ſince they have been honored by the Son of God himſelf,

himſelf, approved by his practice and recommended by his example. And it might be better perhaps in a trading nation, better for the public and better for ourſelves, if more were brought up to trades, and fewer to the learned profeſſions. For trade and commerce cannot well be overſtocked by number of hands, but the learned profeſſions eaſily may; ſo that the profeſſors inſtead of augmenting the ſciences may become a burden to the community and ſtarve one another.

It is added, "And Jeſus increaſed in wiſdom and ſtature, and "in favor with God and man;" As he grew older and bigger, he grew wiſer and better. His improvements were proportionable to his good beginnings, and his manhood fully anſwered all the hopes and expectations raiſed by his younger years. There is many a youth of a promiſing genius ſpoiled before he arrives at the age of man; they are beautiful in the bloſſom, but bring no fruit to perfection: but Jeſus improved in underſtanding as in years, and his "path "was (Prov. IV. 18.) as the ſhining light that ſhineth more and "more unto the perfect day."

As he "increaſed in wiſdom and ſtature," ſo likewiſe "in fa-"vor with God and man." He excelled in all the graces and virtues of private as afterwards of public life; and his pleaſing of men was the natural effect and conſequence of his pleaſing of God. And generally ſpeaking, to diſcharge our duty to God is the moſt likely way to gain the favor and eſteem of men. There is ſomething in virtue that charms and attracts all beholders; and the wicked themſelves cannot but approve it, though they will not practiſe it. "When a man's ways pleaſe the Lord," as Solomon ſaith, (Prov. XVI. 7.) "he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him."

Let us then endevor to copy this example of ſtill life, which our bleſſed Saviour hath ſet us. We cannot be like him as the Son of God, but we may reſemble him as the ſon of man. We cannot imitate him in the miraculous acts of his public miniſtry, but we may imitate him in the virtues of his private life, his ſubmiſſion to his parents, his gradual improvement of his time and his talents,

his humility and induſtry, his reſerve and modeſty, his doing his duty to both and by theſe means growing in favor with both, God and man. And ſo ſhall we live up to the character of the primitive Chriſtians, and reſemble them as they reſembled Chriſt, (Acts II. 47.) "praiſing God and having favor with all the people."

DISSERTATION IX.

On our SAVIOUR's TEMPTATION.

THERE are ſeveral things which we could hardly conceive to have happened, if the Spirit of God had not expreſly informed us that they really have happened. Of this kind is our bleſſed Saviour's temptation by the Devil, as it is related by three of the four evangeliſts. St. Mark relates the fact only in general terms, St. Matthew and St. Luke enter more into the particulars of the ſtory. And they who admit the truth of the goſpel muſt likewiſe admit the truth of this relation, and muſt underſtand it, as they would underſtand any other matter of fact related in the goſpel, litterally according to the plain ſimple ſtile of hiſtory, without having recourſe to figure and allegory. For if this relation is not to be underſtood litterally, there is no knowing what is to be underſtood litterally in the goſpel.

It is ſaid indeed that the evangeliſts relate the thing not as a real tranſaction, but only as a ſpiritual or ideal repreſentation. The evangeliſts ſay, that Jeſus was led ὑπο τȣ πνευματος or εν τῳ πνευματι *by the ſpirit* or *in the ſpirit* into the wilderneſs; juſt as Ezekiel ſaith (VIII. 3.) that "the ſpirit lifted him up," and (XXXVII. 1.) and he was "carried out in the ſpirit of the Lord;" and as St. John ſaith, (Rev. I. 10.) that he "was in the ſpirit," and (XXI. 10.) he was "carried

"carried away in the ſpirit." But the prophets diſtinguiſh theirs altogether as viſionary repreſentations; the evangeliſts make no ſuch diſtinction. Ezekiel ſaith (I. 1.) that he "ſaw viſions of God," and (VIII. 3.) "the ſpirit lifted him up and brought him in the vi-"ſions of God:" and the Revelation plainly conſiſts of viſions, and cannot in any reſpect be compared to the ſtile of the evangeliſts. The evangeliſts relate plain matters of fact in the plain ſtile of hiſtory, and not in the figurative and emblematical language of the prophets. Nothing but abſolute neceſſity ſhould force us to depart from the litteral conſtruction of any text; much leſs ſhould we fly to ſymbolical enigmatical meanings in a plain hiſtorical narration; eſpecially when the ſame or as great objections may be made to the figurative as to the litteral interpretation.

But if this tranſaction is to be underſtood according to the letter, it may ſeem ſtrange that He, who was the Son of God and could caſt out devils with a word, ſhould ſuffer himſelf to be tempted by the devil. It may ſeem ſtrange too, that the devil ſhould pretend to tempt a perſon of ſuch holineſs and dignity as the Son of God, or could ever hope to prevail upon him. And therefore it will be a ſubject not unworthy of our meditation to examin a little into the reaſons of this tranſaction, and inquire particularly, Why ſhould the devil ever preſume to tempt one ſo much his ſuperior as the Son of God, or how could he flatter himſelf with hopes of prevailing upon him? And again, Though the devil ſhould preſume to do it, yet why ſhould the Son of God ever ſuffer it to be done? And again, Though the one ſhould dare to do it and the other permit it in the general, yet why was it done in that particular manner and with thoſe particular circumſtances? Theſe are inquiries, wherein, I believe, every thinking Chriſtian, every one who deſires to underſtand the goſpel oeconomy, would be glad to be ſatisfied: and all ſuch will therefore favor me with their attention to the following particulars.

I. Our firſt inquiry is, Why ſhould the devil ever preſume to tempt a perſon of ſuch holineſs and dignity as the Son of God, or how could

could he flatter himſelf with hopes of prevailing over him, and making him fall down and worſhip him? It is hard to ſay whether the wickedneſs or abſurdity of ſuch an attempt is greater. Now in anſwer to this it may be replied

1. It is ſomewhat probable that the devil did not at this time know Jeſus to be the Son of God, though he might probably know him to be ſome extraordinary perſon. For it is certain that the angels do not know all things; but being finite themſelves, their knowlege too is finite. The things of the goſpel, St. Peter informs us, (1 Pet. I. 12.) the "angels deſire to look into:" And from St. Paul we learn, (Eph. III. 10.) that "now by the Church is made known unto the prin-"cipalities and powers in heavenly places the manifold wiſdom of "God." If then good angels were ignorant of ſeveral things relating to the goſpel oeconomy, we may well ſuppoſe evil angels to be ignorant of them too, if not much more ignorant. The very words of the devil "If thou be the Son of God" ſeem to be ſpoken as if he was not abſolutely certain in the caſe, as if he wanted to try him and to prove him whether he was the Son of God or not, and in what ſenſe he was ſo. We ſee indeed afterwards the devils frequently owning him to be the Meſſiah, the Son of God; but it doth not appear that they knew him to be ſuch at this time, before he had ſignalized himſelf by his miracles or entered upon his public miniſtry.

But 2. ſuppoſing the devil did at this time know Jeſus to be the Son of God, yet why might he not as well tempt the Son of God, as ſet up to be like God, ſaying according to the language of the prophet, (Iſ. XIV. 13, 14.) "I will exalt my throne above the ſtars of God, I "will be like the moſt High?" Why might he not as well endevor to overcome the Son of God and to put a ſtop to the goſpel by fraudulent means now, as afterwards by means violent: why not now by ſpecious inſinuations and large offers as well as by perſecution afterwards, by ſtirring up Judas to betray him and the chief prieſts to kill him? It is impoſſible to ſay what the devil would have gained, if he had ſucceeded in this temptation. It was the greateſt folly indeed as well as the greateſt wickedneſs to attempt it. But how abſurd and unreaſonable

ſoever

ſoever the thing was in itſelf, yet why may not evil ſpirits, forſaken of God and goodneſs, attempt abſurd and unreaſonable things?

And if Satan could preſume to tempt the Son of God, the greateſt, the beſt of the ſons of men muſt not hope to eſcape without temptation. If our Lord and maſter was aſſaulted, well may we the ſervants and diſciples. "Be therefore ſober, be vigilant," as St. Peter adviſes, (1 Pet. V. 8.) "becauſe your adverſary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh "about ſeeking whom he may devour."

II. But though the devil could preſume to tempt the Son of God, yet why ſhould the Son of God, who could caſt out devils with a word, ever ſuffer himſelf to be tempted by the devil? St. Matthew informs us, (IV. 1.) that "Jeſus was led up of the Spirit into the wil-"derneſs to be tempted of the devil:" The expreſſion in St. Mark is very remarkable, (I. 12.) "the Spirit driveth him, εκβαλλει, caſteth "him out," or rather *ſendeth him forth into the wilderneſs*, in the ſame ſenſe as the word is uſed, when it is ſaid (Matt. IX. 38. Luke X. 2.) "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harveſt that he would εκβαλλη "ſend forth laborers into his harveſt;" and (John X. 4.) when the good ſhepherd εκβαλη "putteth forth his own ſheep." St. Luke more reſembles St. Matthew (Luke IV. 1.) "And Jeſus being full of the "Holy Ghoſt returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into "the wilderneſs." It was plainly therefore under the conduct of the Holy Ghoſt, that he was led into the wilderneſs; and ſince he was *led by the Spirit of God to be tempted*, there were doubtleſs ſeveral wiſe ends to be ſerved by it, and ſome of them perhaps we may be able to diſcover.

1. Our Saviour's temptation ſerved to diſplay his virtue, and render it more illuſtrious than it would have been without ſuch a trial. It is no great thing for a man to be good, who never was tried and never had any inducemenrs to the contrary. Virtue, like gold, is to be proved by fire; and its excellence, its perfection is to reſiſt, to overcome temptations. Temptations call forth and bring to light ſeveral graces, which might otherwiſe lie undiſcovered: And therefore we are directed in ſcripture, (James I. 2, 3.) to "count it all joy when we

"fall

" fall into divers temptations, knowing this, that the trying of our " faith worketh patience, (Rom. V. 4, 5.) and patience experience, " and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed." It was proper for the Son of God to " fulfil all righteousness" and to show himself superior to the devil every way, superior to all his secret wiles as well as all his open violences. For it is easy to apprehend that the more he was tried and was conqueror, the more it would be to the shame and confusion of hell, and to his Father's glory and his own: And he appears to be the Son of God by overcoming the devil's assaults upon himself, no less than by casting devils out of others.

2. Our Saviour's temptation not only proveth and displayeth his virtue, but also yieldeth us an example that we should follow his steps. As every one who cometh into the world, and especially every Christian, is to be tempted more or less, it was proper for the captain of our salvation to go before us, and to be made perfect through sufferings. As he was to be a master of all virtue in life as well as in doctrin, it was proper for him to teach us this also among others, how to behave under temptations. (Heb. XII. 1, 2.) " Wherefore let us lay aside " every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us " run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus " the author and finisher of our faith," remembering what he hath said, (Rev. III. 21.) " To him that overcometh will I grant to sit " with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down " with my Father in his throne."

3. Our Saviour's temptation serveth not only for the illustration of his virtue and for an example to us, but moreover may afford us the greatest comfort and encouragement under our temptations. For by this we plainly see, that temptations are only trials of our virtue and no certain indications of God's displeasure, since he permitted his dear and only-begotten Son to be tempted—that unless we comply with the temptation it is no sin to be tempted, since the Son of God himself who was free from sin, yet was not free from temptation—that our Saviour is able to succur us in our temptations, for as the author to the Hebrews speaketh, (II. 18.) " in that he himself hath suffered being " tempted,

" tempted, he is able to ſuccur them that are tempted"—that he is alſo willing to ſuccur us as well as able, for, as the ſame Author ſaith, (IV. 15.) " We have not an high-prieſt which cannot be touched " with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted " like as we are yet without ſin"—that Satan is not invincible, for the Son of God hath overcome him, and we by the grace of God may overcome him in like manner, (John IV. 4.) " becauſe greater is he " that is in us than he that is in the world." The devil cannot force any man to ſin, all that he can do is to tempt us, and it is our fault if we yield to the temptation. (James IV. 7.) " Reſiſt the devil, and he " will flee from you." (1 Cor. X. 13.) " There hath no temptation " taken you, but ſuch as is common to man; but God is faithful, who " will not ſuffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will " with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape that ye may be able " to bear it."

III. But though the devil could preſume to tempt the Son of God, and the Son of God ſhould ſuffer himſelf to be tempted, though the thing was to be done at all, yet why was it done in that particular manner and with thoſe particular circumſtances? why at ſuch a time, in ſuch a place and the like?

As to the *time* of our Saviour's temptation, it was immediately after his baptiſm and before his entry on his public miniſtry. For on the one ſide it was natural for the devil to deſire to ſuppreſs the goſpel in the beginning, to cruſh it as it were in the ſeed, to blaſt it as it were in the bud: and on the other ſide it was proper for Jeſus to prove himſelf to be ſuperior to the temptations of ſin, before he ſet up for a preacher of all righteouſneſs to others. Before this time our bleſſed Saviour was not tempted in this manner, for as his life was private and like other mens, ſo were his temptations alſo private and like other mens, ſin only excepted: Neither was he tempted in this manner after this time, for the adverſary finding this method to be ſo vain and ineffectual now, he might well think it could be to no purpoſe for him to try it any more afterwards, and therefore inſtead of uſing ſecret fraud he had recourſe to open violence and perſecution. And from our Sa-

our's being tempted at this time particularly, we may learn to expect difficulties and diſcouragements, whenever we ſet about the offices of religion, according to the counſel of the wiſe ſon of Sirach, (Ecclus II. 1.) " My ſon if thou come to ſerve the Lord, prepare thy ſoul for " temptation." The aſſaults of the devil are moſt powerful at firſt, at our entrance upon a good life; and if we get the better of them then, we may the more eaſily withſtand them at any time after.

As to the *place* of our Saviour's temptation, it was the wilderneſs, where, as St. Mark addeth, he " was with the wild beaſts," to denote that he was in the moſt deſolate part of it: but the ſame good providence protected him, that delivered David (1 Sam. XVII. 37.) " out " of the paw of the lion and out of the paw of the bear," and preſerved Daniel unhurt in the den of lions. He retired thither (it may piouſly be conceived) to prepare himſelf by meditation, faſting, and prayer for the great work of his miniſtry. Such a retirement upon ſuch an occaſion, hath ſeemed ſo highly proper and expedient to the common ſenſe of mankind, that it hath been practiſed not only by true prophets and holy men of God but alſo by falſe teachers and pretenders to divine inſpiration, not only by Moſes, Elijah and John Baptiſt, but alſo by Numa, Zoroaſtres, Mohammed and others. Now in this retirement it was that the devil aſſaulted our bleſſed Saviour; for here he might think that he ſhould have more opportunity than any where elſe to try his various temptations; here he might think that he ſhould come more unexpected and therefore might meet with better ſucceſs. From this particular inſtance we may learn, that no retreat can afford us a ſanctuary from the aſſaults of Satan. We may fly from the world, but we cannot fly from temptation. The tempter enters into the cloiſters of monks and the caves of hermits, as well as into courts and theatres and places of public reſort; and therefore we ſhould at all times and in all places be upon our guard, and (1 Cor. X. 12.) " he " that thinketh he ſtandeth ſhould take heed leſt he fall." And perhaps the providence of God ordered it ſo that the ſcene of our Saviour's temptation ſhould be laid in the wilderneſs particularly, that we might not entertain too fond an opinion of the holineſs and excellence of a recluſe

recluſe monaſtic ſtate of life above all others; as ſome men more devout than good, of more zeal than diſcretion, of more ſuperſtition than religion, have done: for this is not to "let our light ſhine be-"fore men," (Matt. V. 16.) and is leaſt for the glory of God becauſe leaſt for the good of mankind.

As to the ſpace of *forty days* during which our Saviour retired and faſted, it was in conformity to the ancient types of Moſes and Elijah, (Exod. XXXIV. 28. 1 Kings XIX. 8.) the one the giver of the law, the other the chief of the prophets, who had both done the very ſame thing and for the very ſame number of days. There ſeemeth to have been ſomewhat myſtical in the number *forty*, forty days or forty years, for in the prophetic account they are often the ſame. "Yet *forty* "*days*," cried Jonah, (III. 4.) "and Nineveh ſhall be overthrown:" and God ſpake to Ezekiel, (IV. 6.) "thou ſhalt bear the iniquity of "the houſe of Judah *forty days*; I have appointed thee each day for "a year." *Forty years* God ſuffered the manners of the Iſraelites in the wilderneſs. *Forty years* was the time allowed for Jeremiah's preaching repentance unto the Jews to the deſtruction of Jeruſalem by the Babylonians: And the time from the death of Chriſt to the final deſtruction of Jeruſalem by the Romans was again *forty years*. What was the reaſon of aſſigning this particular number in ſo many inſtances, and in others which might be collected, we cannot pretend to divine. (Acts I. 7.) "It is not for us to know the times or the ſeaſons which "the Father hath put in his own power:" and the clear and perfect comprehenſion of ſuch points will probably make part of our happineſs in the world to come. In imitation of this faſt of our bleſſed Saviour the Church in after ages inſtituted *the faſt of Lent for forty days*; and we ſhould do well indeed to obſerve it as an appointment of human authority; we are now in no danger of abuſing it to ſuperſtition, or holding it as ſacred as if it was inſtituted by Chriſt or his Apoſtles.

As to the *manner* of the devil's *tempting* our Saviour, he appeared to him viſibly; but the evangeliſts have not acquainted us in what form he made his appearance, whether as an angel of light, for ſometimes, as the Apoſtle ſaith, (2 Cor. XI. 14.) "Satan himſelf is transformed

" into an angel of light," or whether under any other diſguiſe, or in his own proper character: thus much is evident, that our Saviour knew him at leaſt before the converſation ended. St. Mark ſaith (ver. 13.) " he was in the wilderneſs forty days tempted of Satan;" St. Luke connects the *tempting* more cloſely with the *forty days* (ver. 2.) " be-" ing forty days tempted of the devil:" but nothing is recorded of thoſe temptations; we have only an account of what paſſed at the expiration of the forty days, of three temptations particularly, more violent we may ſuppoſe, and more memorable than the reſt. Our Saviour during the forty days was ſuſtained by a miraculous power, but " after-" wards he hungered;" and the firſt temptation is founded upon the neceſſity of ſupplying his hunger; " If thou be the Son of God, com-" mand that theſe ſtones be made bread." If he was the Son of God, he might well perform ſuch a miracle for his neceſſary ſuſtenance. This temptation failing, the devil by the power that he had as an angel, and by the permiſſion of God, taketh him along with him; as (Acts VIII. 39.) " the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eu-" nuch ſaw him no more, but Philip was found at Azotus." The devil " taketh him along with him into the holy city, and ſetteth him " on a pinnacle," or rather *on a wing*, one of the higheſt parts " of " the temple, and ſaith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, caſt " thyſelf down," alleging a text of ſcripture for his encouragement; for " it is written, He ſhall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in " their hands they ſhall bear thee up, leſt at any time thou daſh thy foot " againſt a ſtone;" which though ſpoken by the Pſalmiſt concerning any good man in general, was yet applicable to the Meſſiah, the Son of God in particular. What is the ſecond temptation in St. Matthew's goſpel, is the third in St. Luke's: but I rather follow the order of St. Matthew, becauſe he diſtinguiſhes it more exactly, (ver. 5.) " Then " the devil taketh him up into the holy city," and (ver. 8.) " Again, " the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain," whereas St. Luke connects his ſtory only with the word *and*, (ver. 5.) " And " the devil taking him up into an high mountain," &c. and (ver. 9.) " And he brought him to Jeruſalem," without diſtinguiſhing particu-

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larly the time or order of the temptations, as if it was not very material to the truth of the hiſtory. " Again, the devil taketh him up " into an exceeding high mountain;" and as Moſes ſaw miraculouſly all the land of Canaan from mount Nebo, ſo the devil miraculouſly repreſented to Chriſt all the kingdoms of the world from an exceeding high mountain, " All the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of " them, in a moment of time," a figurative expreſſion of the whole for a part, a figure frequently uſed, and juſt before of John the Baptiſt (Matt. III. 5, 6.) " Then went out to him Jeruſalem, and all " Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized " of him in Jordan, confeſſing their ſins." This was a tempting object to ambition, and all this the devil offered to Jeſus, provided he would fall down and worſhip him; " All theſe things will I give thee, " if thou wilt fall down and worſhip me." St. Luke's account is more particular, " All this power will I give thee, and the glory of " them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomſoever I will " I give it. If thou therefore wilt worſhip me, all ſhall be thine." By the permiſſion of God the devil had certainly great power over the world, and therefore is frequently ſtiled in ſcripture (John XII. 31. XIV. 30. XVI. 11.) " the prince of this world," and (Eph. II. 2.) " the prince of the power of the air:" but to give the kingdoms of men to whomſoever he will is aſſerted to be the peculiar prerogative of God, (Dan. II. 17.) " The moſt High ruleth in " the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomſoever he will;" and therefore the father of lies muſt have been guilty of a moſt abominable falſehood, unleſs we can ſuppoſe that ſuch a power might be given to him for a time to tempt Jeſus, as he had an extraordinary commiſſion to tempt Job. Extraordinary means are uſed in extraordinary caſes, but common Chriſtians will be tempted in a more common manner, by laying baits and allurements in their way, by ſuggeſting wicked thoughts to them, and in ſome meaſure as it was done in our Saviour's caſe, by working upon their wants and neceſſities, by encouraging their confidence and preſumption, by gratifying their pride and ambition. " Let us therefore take heed," as the Apoſtle ſpeaketh,

eth, (2 Cor. II. 11.) " leſt Satan get an advantage of us, for we are " not ignorant of his devices."

As to the *manner* of our Saviour's *repelling* the devil's temptations, it was by the word of God oppoſed to all the wiles and ſtratagems of the tempter, by the word of God in its plain and genuin ſenſe oppoſed to the word of God perverted and abuſed. When the devil would have urged our Saviour to ſupply his neceſſities by the miracle of turning ſtones into bread, he could not be induced ſo far to diſtruſt the goodneſs of God, but replied in the words of Moſes, " It is written (Deut. VIII. 3.) Man ſhall not live by bread alone, " but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." If there be occaſion, God can ſupport a man by ſupernatural as eaſily as by natural means, by a word's ſpeaking as well as by bread, as he fed the Iſraelites miraculouſly with manna in the wilderneſs. When the devil would have encouraged our Saviour to caſt himſelf down from the top of the temple, in confidence that the angels would bear him up according to the promiſe of the Pſalmiſt, he was as far from preſuming upon the providence of God as he was before from diſtruſting it, and anſwered in the words of Moſes, " It is written " again, (Deut. VI. 16.) Thou ſhalt not tempt the Lord thy God." In all dangers we ſhould rely upon God, but not thruſt ourſelves unneceſſarily into danger upon a preſumption that his goodneſs is obliged to preſerve us. When the devil would have ſeduced our Saviour to commit idolatry with the promiſe of all the kingdoms of the world, he was then more provoked, and anſwers with ſome kind of warmth and indignation, " Get thee hence, Satan, for it is " written" in ſeveral places of Scripture, (Deut. VI. 13. X. 20. 1 Sam. VII. 3.) " Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him " only ſhalt thou ſerve." Our Saviour's now commanding the devil to depart from him, is a farther proof of what was before aſſerted, that this was the laſt temptation. From our Saviour's thus repelling all temptations by the word of God we may learn how uſeful how neceſſary it is for Chriſtians, to be well read in the holy ſcriptures, and to take unto them the ſpiritual armour recommended by

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St. Paul: (Eph. VI. 11, &c.) " Put on the whole armour of God " that ye may be able to ſtand againſt the wiles of the devil; For " we wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt principalities, " againſt powers, againſt the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, " againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places; Wherefore take unto " you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withſtand " in the evil day, and having done all to ſtand; Stand therefore " having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breaſt-" plate of righteouſneſs; And your feet ſhod with the preparation " of the goſpel of peace; Above all taking the ſhield of faith " wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the " wicked; And take the helmet of ſalvation, and the ſword of the " Spirit which is the word of God." The word of God can beſt teach us both how to reſiſt evil and how to do good, and (2 Tim. III. 19.) " is able to make us wiſe unto ſalvation through faith which is " in Chriſt Jeſus."

In the concluſion we read, that " When the devil had ended all " the temptation he departed from him for a ſeaſon," intending to make uſe of other opportunities and of other means and inſtruments to oppoſe him and ſtop the progreſs of the goſpel. He came to him again at his paſſion particularly, as we learn from our Saviour himſelf, (John XIV. 30.) " The prince of this world cometh," for this was their hour and the power of darkneſs, " and hath nothing in me," that accuſer hath nothing whereof he can accuſe me, he who hath the power of death can find nothing worthy of death in me. In St. Matthew it is ſaid that upon our Saviour's bidding him to depart, " Then " he leaveth him, and behold angels came and miniſtered unto him," which is alſo confirmed by St. Mark. As the devil tempted him viſibly, ſo the good angels viſibly miniſtered unto him: And what they did to him viſibly they will alſo do to us inviſibly, being (Heb. I. 14.) " miniſtering ſpirits ſent forth to miniſter for them who ſhall be heirs " of ſalvation." And what a powerful motive is this to patient continuance in well doing, that if we do not miniſter unto our luſts we ourſelves ſhall be miniſtered unto by angels! The more we are like

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Chriſt in his temptation, the more we ſhall be like him in his glory. If we conquer with him here, we ſhall triumph with him hereafter; If we ſuffer with him in this world, we ſhall reign with him in the world to come. (James I. 12.) "Bleſſed is the man that endureth "temptation, for when he is tried he ſhall receive the crown of life, "which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him."

DISSERTATION X.

On Faſting.

AS there are certain times and ſeaſons appointed by the Church for humiliation and faſting, we cannot help ſometimes turning our thoughts towards this ſubject. And this will be the more proper topic of diſcourſe, becauſe there is nothing that men are apter to undervalue or overvalue, to be too careleſs or too careful in obſerving. In former times the greateſt weight and ſtreſs were laid upon it, as the perfection of religion. In later times it hath been treated as the degeneracy of ſuperſtition, though really it be neither the one or the other. The truth is, it is rare for men to diſtinguiſh rightly between the uſe of a thing and the abuſe of it; nothing is more uſual than for one extreme to produce another, dull religioniſts to beget libertins and libertins to beget dull religioniſts. And even among thoſe who allow of faſting, yet how few are agreed as to the *meaſure* and *manner* of faſting, ſome regarding it as little more than matter of form, others loading it with vain obſervances and abuſing it even to ſuperſtition.

Theſe are points of ſome importance in the conduct of life, and wherein it will become us to be ſatisfied; One would not willingly

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err in either extreme, one would not be thought either ſuperſtitious or profane: And therefore we will inquire in the firſt place, Whether faſting be any part of the duty of a Chriſtian; and if ſufficient reaſon be found why we ſhould faſt, it will be proper then to inquire in the ſecond place, How we ſhould faſt, and after what manner this part of our duty may be ſo diſcharged as to be moſt acceptable to God and moſt uſeful to ourſelves.

I. Our firſt inquiry is, Whether faſting be any part of the duty of a Chriſtian. It muſt be allowed that eating is in itſelf an act perfectly indifferent; for certainly there is neither any virtue in not eating nor any crime in eating; and ſo faſting cannot be ſaid to be in itſelf any virtue. But though eating be a thing indifferent in itſelf, yet ſometimes it may not be indifferent in its circumſtances and conſequences; and ſo though faſting be not in itſelf any virtue, yet it may be the means and occaſion of virtue.

Even with regard to our health, phyſicians will tell us that moſt of our diſeaſes ariſe from intemperance; if we would live healthily, we muſt live ſparingly; the beſt phyſic in many caſes is abſtinence. If faſting be of ſervice with regard to the body, it may be ſtill more ſerviceable with regard to the mind. As long as we dwell in theſe earthly tabernacles, there is ſo near an affinity between the ſoul and the body that they conſtantly ſympathize together; what indiſpoſeth the one that alſo indiſpoſeth the other; and the motions and operations of the mind are either favored or obſtructed, forwarded or retarded by the health or ſickneſs, the vigor or decay of the body. We not only know that it fareth thus with us, but we feel it almoſt every day, though perhaps we know not enough of the nature of body and ſpirit to explain the manner of it.

Now a little experience may teach us, that after eating plentifully we cannot apply our minds to any thing ſo cloſely as before. When the ſtomach is full, the head is ſeldom clear. The life of a ſtudent ſhould be a life of temperance and abſtinence. This begetteth no crudities and fumes of indigeſtion, it ſharpeneth the wit, quickeneth the memory, cleareth the underſtanding, and ſtrengtheneth the judgment.

And will eating plentifully indiſpoſe us for thinking, and will it not likewiſe indiſpoſe us for praying? Is abſtinence proper for thoſe who are engaged in the ſtudy of things human, and is there not the like neceſſity for it in our contemplation of things divine? Will it give as it were wings to the ſoul in her flights of ſpeculation, and will it not likewiſe aid and exalt her in her flights of devotion? Eſpecially when we are deprecating the divine judgments hanging over us and juſt ready to burſt upon our heads, faſting ſeemeth to be more particularly proper to ſuch prayers, and ſuch prayers to faſting. When we are in fear and concern, we naturally betake ourſelves to faſting and ſupplication. Impending judgments, like the hand-writing upon the wall, ſoon put an end to all our mirth and feſtivity.

As faſting is a proper handmaid to meditation and prayer, ſo likewiſe to repentance. It is a ſort of contradiction for a man to be repenting and feaſting, humbling and afflicting his ſoul and at the ſame time cheriſhing and indulging his body. The full and pampered naturally incline to eaſe and indolence. The ſoul cannot be rightly mortified, unleſs we mortify the body too. Too much gratification and indulgence might perhaps be the cauſe or occaſion of our fall; and ſo forbearance and abſtinence may be the beſt means of our riſing again.

Faſting may likewiſe be an help not only to our recovery from a ſtate of ſin, but moreover to our confirmation in a ſtate of virtue. It is the crown of virtue to have a ſoul ſuperior to the pleaſures of ſenſe, for the judgment to lead and the will to follow, reaſon to command and paſſion and appetite to obey; And how can the mind attain or ſecure to herſelf this aſcendency; how can the ſpirit prevail thus over the fleſh without continence and abſtinence? High-living is as it were fuel to the fire; it inflames the luſts and paſſions; and maketh the beaſt within us ſuperior to the man. "Every man that ſtriveth for the "maſtery," ſaith the apoſtle, (1 Cor. IX. 25.) "is temperate in all "things; Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an "incorruptible." The maſtery of ourſelves is a greater and more noble maſtery than that of the whole world. Alexander could conquer

quer the world; but feaſting, drinking, and reveling, he could not conquer himſelf.

We ſee, though faſting be no virtue in itſelf, yet it may be the means of virtue, by contributing to our health, by being a help to meditation and reflection, to ſupplication and prayer, to repentance from ſin and to perſeverance in virtue. And upon all or any of theſe accounts, private perſons may reaſonably injoin it to themſelves, public ſocieties may injoin it to their members, and much more may Almighty God injoin it to his creatures; and whether he hath injoined it or not, we may ſoon learn from his infallible oracles, the holy ſcriptures.

It is evident at firſt ſight, that, under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, faſting was frequently injoined and frequently practiſed by the whole people in general as well as by private perſons in particular. It would be endleſs to quote paſſages out of the law and the prophets. "Turn ye "even to me," ſaith the Lord by the prophet Joel, (Joel II. 12, 13.) "with all your heart and with faſting and with weeping and with "mourning, and rend your heart and not your garments, and turn "unto the Lord your God; for he is gracious and merciful, ſlow to "anger, and of great kindneſs, and repenteth him of the evil:" And indeed the Jews were ſcarce ever in any diſtreſs or difficulty, but they kept a national faſt. We ſee the good pſalmiſt frequently humbling and afflicting his ſoul with faſting (Pſal. XXXV. 13.) "When "they were ſick, my cloathing was ſackcloth, I humbled my ſoul "with faſting." Some perſons reproached him for it, (LXIX. 10.) "When I wept and chaſtened my ſoul with faſting, that was my re-"proach." But he ſtill perſiſted in it (CIX. 24.) "My knees are "weak through faſting, and my fleſh faileth of fatneſs." We ſee Nehemiah faſting for the affliction of the people. (Neh. I. 4.) "And "it came to paſs when I heard theſe words, that I ſat down and wept, "and mourned certain days, and faſted and prayed before the God "of Heaven:" We ſee the prophet Daniel too faſting in like manner; and his faſting and prayers were ſo well accepted that an angel was ſent from heaven to comfort him. In after-ages Anna the pro-

phetess "ſerved God with faſtings and prayers night and day," ſays St. Luke; (Luke II. 37.) and we know the diſciples of the phariſees and the diſciples of John the Baptiſt "faſted often." Even the Ninevites, who were Heathens, repented at the preaching of Jonah, (III. 5, &c.) and "proclaimed a faſt," (ſo reaſonable did it ſeem to the common ſenſe of mankind) "and put on ſackcloth and ſat in aſhes, "and cried mightily unto God," and thereby prevented their immediate deſtruction. Cornelius, who was a Roman centurion, but a proſelyte to the Jewiſh religion, (Acts X. 30.) "was faſting and pray-"ing in his houſe," when he ſaw the viſion of an angel, who directed him in the way to ſalvation.

But this doth not fully come up to our purpoſe. The proving of faſting to be a duty under the law doth not prove it to be a duty under the goſpel. It may be the Jews were obliged to faſt, but how doth it appear that the ſame is incumbent upon Chriſtians? It is true the diſciples faſted not in our Saviour's life-time, ſo that the diſciples of the phariſees and of John the Baptiſt came to our Saviour to aſk him the reaſon of it, (Matt. IX. 14, 15. Mark II. Luke V.) "Why do we "and the phariſees faſt oft but thy diſciples faſt not?" Our Saviour declares the reaſon why his diſciples faſted not while he was with them, and at the ſame time foretels that they ſhould faſt after he was taken from them; "Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn as long as the "bridegroom is with them? but the days will come when the bride-"groom ſhall be taken from them, and then ſhall they faſt." As the gueſts invited to a marriage cannot without abſurdity faſt, ſo long as they are at the feaſt with the bridegroom; ſo my diſciples cannot faſt with any propriety or decency, ſo long as I the bridegroom of the Church am with them; their faſting now in my preſence would be as improper as at a marriage-feaſt; but in my abſence they ſhall faſt.

In his diſcourſe upon the mount he giveth directions about *faſting* as well as about *alms-giving* and *prayer*, and promiſeth a reward to the right performance of the one as well as of the others: And can we ſuppoſe that he would give directions about a thing which was never to be obſerved? or that he would promiſe a reward from his Father

Father in heaven to the doing of that which it was no part of our duty to do? In another place (Matt. XVII. 21.) he telleth his diſciples that a certain kind of devils was not to be caſt out *but by prayer and faſting*; "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by "prayer and faſting;" intimating at leaſt that faſting would make our prayers more fervent and more effectual.

As our Saviour foretold, that his diſciples ſhould faſt after he was taken from them, ſo we find expreſs mention is made of their faſting in more places than one of the Acts of the Apoſtles. (XII. 2, 3.) "As they miniſtered to the Lord and faſted, the Holy Ghoſt "ſaid, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I "have called them: And when they had faſted and prayed, and "laid their hands on them, they ſent them away." Again (XIV. 23.) "When they had ordained them elders in every Church, and "had prayed with faſting, they commended them to the Lord on "whom they believed." And for St. Paul in particular, he ſpeaketh more than once, (2 Cor. VI. 5. XI. 27.) of his "being in watch-"ings often, in faſtings often;" and doubtleſs this was the method by "which he kept under his body, and brought it into ſubjection, "leſt (1 Cor. IX. 27.) that by any means when he had preached to "others, he himſelf ſhould be a caſt-away." Here are examples and authorities enow for a thing, which we pretend not to be any virtue in itſelf, but only the means of virtue.

II. But allowing that faſting is part of the duty of a Chriſtian, allowing that there are ſufficient reaſons why we ſhould faſt, the queſtion ſtill remains, How we ſhould faſt, and after what manner this part of our duty may be ſo diſcharged as to be moſt acceptable to God, and moſt uſeful to ourſelves.

It is hardly poſſible to give any preſcription that will ſerve alike in all caſes, men being ſo very different one from another in the temper of their minds as well as in the conſtitution of their bodies. What is mortification to one may be indulgence to another, as on the reverſe what is indulgence to one may be mortification to another. Every body is the propereſt judge of his own conſtitution,

and

and knoweth beſt what will or what will not agree with it: and ſo it muſt be left to every body's judgment and diſcretion to proportion the *meaſure* and *manner* of his faſting accordingly. Only this one may obſerve in the general, that the end of faſting being to raiſe and improve our devotion, it is ſo far good as it anſwers that end and no farther. The thing may be overdone as well as underdone; and without doubt it is a groſs miſtake to abſtain to ſuch a degree, as to ſuperinduce ſickneſs or endanger our health. For this would be through faſting to defeat the very end of faſting, this inſtead of inlivening and inflaming our devotion would rather deaden and extinguiſh it; and it is a maxim of ſcripture as well as of reaſon, that "mercy is" at all times "better than ſacrifice." But then on the other hand let us not plead this excuſe needleſly; and becauſe faſting may perhaps be diſagreeable to us, imagin therefore that it is prejudicial to our health, for God is not to be deceived, though we may deceive ourſelves.

As the *meaſure* and *manner* of his faſting muſt be left very much to every one's own judgment and diſcretion, ſo likewiſe muſt the proper *times* and *ſeaſons*. But this is ſpoken with regard to a man's private faſts, for as to the public ones of the Church every member of the Church ought to obſerve them in conformity and obedience to lawful authority. Theſe more particularly are the *Vigils* or watching and praying before certain feſtivals, in order to prepare our minds for a due obſervation of the enſuing ſolemnity: and the *ember days* (ſo called, I ſuppoſe, for the ſame reaſon that the firſt day of Lent is called *Aſh-wedneſday* from the cuſtom of ſprinkling embers or aſhes on their heads in times of ſorrow and humiliation) ſet apart for imploring the divine bleſſing by faſting and prayer upon the ordinations performed at ſuch times in the Church: and except it be on Chriſtmas day every *friday* in the year, which the primitive Church always obſerved as a faſt in commemoration of our Saviour's crucifixion on that day: and the *forty days of Lent*, and more eſpecially the wedneſdays and fridays during this ſolemn ſeaſon, when public diverſions ceaſe and ſermons are preached

preached in ſeveral Churches: and it happens very well, that Lent is always in the *ſpringing* ſeaſon of the year when perhaps for natural and phyſical reaſons it may be proper and neceſſary for a man to live more temperately and abſtemiouſly than at other times. Not that we muſt imagin there is any inherent holineſs in one day or in one time more than another; but we ſhall be in danger of doing it at no time, if we neglect to obſerve the particular times appointed for it.

Another miſtake that men are apt to fall into is their placing of faſting not ſo much in abſtaining from meat as in abſtaining only from certain kinds of meat; and ſo though they eat never ſo little of one kind thinking they do ill, though they eat never ſo much of another kind ſtill thinking they do well. But this idle diſtinction of meats is no better than popery and ſuperſtition; and among the falſe doctrins which ſhould prevail in the latter times, the apoſtle mentions particularly, (1 Tim. IV. 3.) "the commanding to abſtain from meats, which God hath created to be received with "thankſgiving of them which believe and know the truth." Indeed if a man findeth upon experience that one ſort of meat anſwers the end of faſting better than another, he is in the right to give the preference to that in his ſeaſons of faſting: but otherwiſe it is not to be conceived how one is better or worſe than another, or how eating of fiſh ſhould recommend us to God and eating of fleſh ſhould offend him. When there was a greater ſcarcity of cattle than there is at preſent, it might be a good political reaſon to injoin the eating of fiſh in Lent, for the preſervation and increaſe of cattle and for the encouragement of the fiſhing-trade; and this is the reaſon aſſigned in the ſtatutes of Edward VI: but I believe no other good reaſon either natural or religious can be aſſigned for this uſage. Fiſh eſpecially with high poignant ſauces is without doubt more luxurious than plain meat of any kind; it is thought a more ſumptuous and delicate entertainment, and with ſuch diet a man may be ſaid to be *feaſting* rather than *faſting*. Such things may ſeem below our notice; but ſo great a ſtreſs is laid upon this diſtinction of meats by thoſe of another communion, and even by many miſtaken perſons of our own com-

communion, that I thought it not improper to say thus much concerning it; following herein the direction of St. Paul, (1 Tim. IV. 4, &c.) "Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by "the word of God and prayer; if thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ."

Another thing we should remember, that fasting is only the *means* to an end and not the *end* itself: and as such we should use it, referring it still to something higher and not resting in it for its own sake. The bare opus operatum is of no value or signification. Unless we are the better men and better Christians for our fasting, we had as good not fast at all, mocking God and deceiving ourselves. And we should remember our Saviour's directions, (Matt. VI.) not to fast that we may appear unto men to fast; "not as the hypocrits to be of a sad countenance and disfigure our faces, but to "anoint our head and wash our face" as at other times; and not, as Pharaoh's lean cattle devoured the plump and well-favored ones, to suffer our austerity and mortification to eat up our good nature and good manners. The right method of keeping a truly religious fast is to use such abstinence as may raise our devotion and not impair our health; to withdraw from the business and pleasures of this world, and attend to the weightier concerns of the next; to subdue the body, and spiritualize the soul; to repent heartily of our sins past, and resolve effectually against them for the time to come; to be severe only to ourselves, to deny only ourselves, to be gentle to all others, and especially to abound in alms-giving to the poor. The least that any one should do, is what he saveth by fasting to bestow in charity; but they who have it in their power to do more, ought to have it likewise in their inclination. For according to the prophet, this is the fast that "God hath chosen and an acceptable "day to the Lord. (Is. LVIII. 5, &c.) "Is it such a fast that I "have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down "his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under "him?

" him? wilt thou call this a faſt and an acceptable day to the Lord? " Is not this the faſt that I have choſen? to unlooſe the bands of " wickedneſs, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppreſſed " go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy " bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are caſt " out to thy houſe? when thou ſeeſt the naked that thou cover him, " and that thou hide not thyſelf from thy own fleſh? Then ſhall " thy light break forth as the morning, then ſhalt thou call and the " Lord ſhall anſwer." Our bleſſed Saviour himſelf inſinuates the ſame thing, for immediately after his directions about faſting he ſubjoins theſe words, (Matt. VI. 19, 20.) " Lay not up for your- " ſelves treaſures upon earth, where moth and ruſt doth corrupt, " and where thieves break through and ſteal; but lay up for your- " ſelves treaſures in heaven, where neither moth nor ruſt doth cor- " rupt, and where thieves do not break through and ſteal." (2 Tim. II. 7.) " Conſider what I ſay, and the Lord give you underſtanding " in all things."

DISSERTATION XI.

On SWEARING.

OUR bleſſed Saviour in his Sermon upon the mount, as it is called, prohibits all ſwearing: (Matt. V. 34.) " But I ſay un- " to you, Swear not at all." St. James after his maſter's example delivers a precept much to the ſame purpoſe: (James V. 12.) " Above all things, my brethren, ſwear not." And perhaps there are no two precepts in the goſpel, which have been more miſun-

derſtood and miſapplied by ſome, and more neglected and violated by others.

For ſome there are who have argued from hence, that all kind of ſwearing is utterly unlawful and forbidden to Chriſtians, that the moſt ſolemn occaſions cannot juſtify or excuſe it, that our governors have no right or pretence to require it; and for their parts they will not take an oath to ſatisfy any body, no more in a court of judicature than out of one, neither cuſtom nor law ſhall oblige them to, it, they will only make affirmation, and their affirmation ſhall be ſufficient, and as ſatisfactory as the oaths of others. And the legiſlature have been ſo tender, ſo condeſcending, as to permit their plea, and indulge them in this particular, ſo that they enjoy in this reſpect as great or greater privileges than any Peer of the land, his aſſerting of a thing upon his honor not availing in ſo many caſes as their aſſeveration.

Others there are who run into the contrary extreme, and have ſo little ſcruple and reverence for an oath, that they make a practice of ſwearing upon every trifling occaſion, imagining I ſuppoſe that it addeth ſignificance to their diſcourſe, diſcovers fire and ſpirit, and giveth them an air of authority and importance. It is to be hoped indeed that the practice is not ſo faſhionable or ſo common now as ſome among us may remember it. It hath deſcended much from high life to perſons of inferior condition: but ſtill there will always be ſome *great vulgar* as well as ſmall; all who bear the name of gentlemen have not the manners of gentlemen: and it is not only in the ſtreets and among the loweſt of the people, that we hear oaths and execrations; but perſons of higher rank can thunder them out upon occaſion, they are the language of loſing gameſters, the diſcharges of paſſion and anger, and expletives of idle inſignificant converſation.

In oppoſition therefore to both extremes, thoſe who ſcruple an oath too little and thoſe who ſcruple it too much, and to vindicate the true meaning of our Saviour and of his apoſtle St. James, we ſhall endevor in the 1ſt place to prove the lawfulneſs of oaths upon ſome occaſions, and in the 2d place we ſhall offer ſome arguments to ſhow the great

great ſin of common ſwearing, and to diſſuade men from ſo horrid a cuſtom, of which it is difficult to ſay whether the folly or impiety is greater.

I. In the 1ſt place we ſhall endevor to prove the lawfulneſs of oaths upon ſome occaſions; and to make the matter as ſhort and as clear as we can, theſe proofs ſhall be derived from *reaſon*, from *ſcripture*, and from the authority of *inconteſtable examples*.

1. From *reaſon*. For what is there in the nature and uſe of an oath to render it unlawful? It is an appeal to God, as ſovran lord and judge of the world, as a witneſs to the truth and an avenger of perjury. It is in effect acknowleging his principal attributes, his providence that he ſuperintends and regards the actions of men, his omnipreſence that he is with us at all times and in all places, his omniſcience that he is privy to the very thoughts and intents of our hearts, his power that he is able to reward or puniſh us, his goodneſs and his juſtice, that he will favor truth and equity, and chaſtiſe falſhood and wrong. It is without doubt an act of piety and religion, provided it be performed, as all acts of religion ought to be performed, with ſolemnity reverence and devotion.

There is then nothing in it that can offend God, and what is there that can be juſtly offenſive to men? Duely adminiſtered and duely taken, it is ſo far from being prejudicial to mankind, that it is even neceſſary to the peace and welfare of ſociety. It is the great ſupport of government, and the beſt ſecurity the governors and the governed can give to each other, thoſe of their protection and theſe of their obedience. It is the moſt deciſive method of determining civil controverſies, the utmoſt aſſurance that can paſs between men of mutual confidence and fidelity, the ſtrongeſt obligation that can be laid upon us to bear teſtimony to the truth, no evidence leſs than the greateſt being thought ſufficient in caſes of importance, and there being no greater evidence than a depoſition upon oath; and if men will not be ſatisfied with this, they will be ſatisfied with nothing. Are not they therefore who forbid the uſe of oaths upon ſuch ſolemn occaſions, really enemies to the ſecurity and happineſs of civil ſociety? Why is the atheiſt reputed ſuch an enemy to civil ſociety, but becauſe he cancels all the

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obligations of religion, without which no civil ſociety can well be ſupported? and next to the deſtroying of all religion, is the aboliſhing of ſo principal a part of religion.

2. From *ſcripture.* It is part of the moral law of Moſes, (Deut. VI. 13.) "Thou ſhalt fear the Lord thy God and ſerve him, and "ſhalt ſwear by his name." The royal pſalmiſt is ſo far from forbidding oaths in all caſes, that he ſaith, (Pſal. LXIII. 11.) "Every one "that ſweareth by God ſhall glory," or ſhall be commended, "but "the mouth of them that ſpeak lies ſhall be ſtopped." Nor was this peculiar to the Jewiſh conſtitution, but is foretold likewiſe of the Chriſtian diſpenſation and of the times of the goſpel. "Unto me," ſaith God in the prophet Iſaiah, (XLV. 23.) "every knee ſhall bow, every "tongue ſhall ſwear;" and (LXV. 16.) "He who bleſſeth himſelf "in the earth ſhall bleſs himſelf in the God of truth, and he who "ſweareth in the earth ſhall ſwear by the God of truth." And the apoſtle is ſo far from abſolutely condemning ſwearing, that he mentions it with approbation upon ſome occaſions, "An oath for confirmation," ſays he, (Heb. VI. 16.) "is an end of all ſtrife." The only condition to be obſerved is, that it be done, as the prophet Jeremiah preſcribes, (IV. 21.) "Thou ſhalt ſwear, The Lord liveth, in truth, in "judgment, and in righteouſneſs." We cannot therefore approve the multiplication of oaths, and much leſs can we approve the haſty indecent manner wherein they are uſually adminiſtered even in our courts of juſtice. They ſhould never be employed but upon weighty and important occaſions, and ought always to be adminiſtered and taken with the greateſt reverence and devotion.

3. From the authority of *inconteſtable examples.* The practice of invoking God to bear witneſs to the truth hath prevailed ſo univerſally in all ages and in all nations of the world, that it may juſtly be eſteemed a part of the law of nature; nor were there ever any who queſtioned the lawfulneſs of oaths, and abſolutely forbad the uſe of them in all caſes, before this new ſect aroſe among us. The patriarchs of old made no ſcruple of taking an oath upon ſpecial occaſions; for it was done (Gen. XXI. 24.) by Abraham to Abimelech, (XXVI. 31.) by Iſaac

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to the ſame or another Abimelech, (XXXI. 53.) by Jacob to Laban, and (XLVI. 31.) by Joſeph to Jacob. Nor was it practiſed only by the beſt men before the law, but alſo by thoſe under the law; as David "ſware" to Jonathan, (1 Sam. XX. 17.) that he would "ſhow kind-"neſs to him and to his houſe for ever;" and (Ezra X. 5.) "Ezra "made the chief prieſts, the Levites, and all Iſrael to ſwear that they "ſhould do according to his word; and they ſware." Nor are there examples only among the Jews, but likewiſe of the beſt among Chriſtians. It is obſervable that St. Paul upon weighty occaſions frequently uſeth this or the like manner of ſpeaking, "—As God is true—Before "God I lie not—God is my record—God is my witneſs"—all which expreſſions contain the very eſſence and formality of an oath. Our bleſſed Saviour himſelf was interrogated upon oath by the high prieſt, (Matt. XXVI. 63) "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us "whether thou be the Chriſt the Son of God;" and our Saviour made anſwer accordingly. In the Revelation (X. 6.) "an angel" is repreſented as "ſwearing by him that liveth for ever and ever." God himſelf is often repreſented in ſcripture as ſwearing by himſelf; for as the apoſtle obſerves, (Heb. VI. 13.) "becauſe he could ſwear by no greater, he "ſware by himſelf." And can you have better authorities for any thing than theſe, not only the practice of almoſt all mankind, but of the patriarchs and of the beſt men before the law and under the law, of an apoſtle, nay of our Saviour, of an angel, nay of God himſelf?

Theſe arguments and authorities, I think, put it beyond all doubt, that the prohibition of St. James, and likewiſe that other of our Saviour are to be underſtood not abſolutely, but with ſome limitation and exception, as moſt other general rules are; for otherwiſe we ſhall make one part of ſcripture to claſh with another, and our Saviour's practice to contradict his doctrin. The context itſelf evinces, that theſe prohibitions are not to be underſtood without ſome limitation and exception. "But I ſay unto you," ſaith our Saviour, "Swear "not at all, but let your communication be yea yea, nay nay;" where the oppoſition plainly ſhoweth, that he is ſpeaking of ſwearing only in common converſation. In like manner St. James,

"Above

" Above all things my brethren ſwear not, but let your yea be yea " and your nay nay;" that is when in diſcourſe you affirm or deny any thing, affirm or deny it without any oath or imprecation. And the oaths which are particularly forbidden both by our Saviour and by St. James, that we ſhould ſwear " neither by heaven, nor by " earth, nor by Jeruſalem," and the like, are ſuch oaths as the Jews imagined that they might lawfully uſe in ordinary converſation, but never employed upon extraordinary occaſions and before a court of judicature; and therefore our Saviour and St. James muſt be underſtood to ſpeak only of oaths in ordinary converſation, and not upon extraordinary occaſions and before a court of judicature.

II. The ſwearing then, that is abſolutely forbidden, is common profane ſwearing, and we ſhall now in the ſecond place offer ſome arguments to ſhow the great ſin of it and to diſſuade men from ſo horrid a cuſtom, of which it is difficult to ſay whether the folly or impiety is greater. And that theſe arguments may have greater weight and efficacy we ſhall propoſe them diſtinctly to your conſideration.

1. Conſider what are the ſprings and cauſes from whence this vice uſually ariſeth. For this is the argument that our Saviour himſelf urgeth againſt it, that *it cometh of evil.* " Let your communication " be yea yea, nay nay, for whatſoever is more than theſe cometh of " evil." And without doubt the root cannot be good that beareth ſuch corrupt fruit. It proceeds ſometimes from levity and wantonneſs of mind, ſometimes from anger and paſſion, ſometimes from pride and imperiouſneſs, ſometimes from debauchery and drunkenneſs, and ſometimes from licentiouſneſs and irreligion. And if ſuch are the cauſes, what muſt be the effects? will one crime warrant and authorize another? Such cauſes as would even ſpoil a good action, muſt ſurely very much aggravate a bad one, and render " ſin exceeding ſinful."

2. Conſider that of all ſins this is the leaſt engaging or inviting; there is no gratification in it, there is no temptation to it. It doth not anſwer any end, nor turn to any account; it doth not recreate any ſenſe, nor indulge any appetite; it is attended neither with pleaſure, nor profit, nor honor, ſo that of all crimes it will admit of the leaſt excuſe or alle-

alleviation. Other vices may be ſomewhat conſtitutional and the effects of our natural temper and diſpoſition; but no body was ever born of a damning complexion and conſtitution, no natural inſtinct inclines a man to curſe and ſwear. Other vices have their baits to catch and allure us, but this preſents us I may ſay with only the naked hook, with deſtruction without any diſguiſe or advantage. All other ſinners enjoy ſome pleaſure and ſatisfaction. The Epicure indulges his taſte and diſplays his delicacy at the ſame time that he ſatisfies his hunger. The drunkard is inſnared, oftentimes before he is aware, by the goodneſs of the liquor and the mirth and agreeableneſs of the company. The unclean perſon boaſteth of ſenſual delights, and is raviſhed with the charms of love and beauty. The ambitious would not quit his native eaſe but for honor and power; nor would the miſer barter happineſs, if he did not barter it for gold. But the profane ſwearer is without all excuſe, enjoys no pleaſure, obtains no advantage, is wicked only for the ſake of wickedneſs, and as the prophet expreſſeth it (Iſ. LII. 3.) "ſelleth himſelf for nothing."

3. Conſider that this ſin is eaſily avoided, which is a farther aggravation of the guilt and folly of it. The great difficulty in forſaking other ſins is, that they are often agreeable to our nature and conſtitution, there are ſtrong temptations ſolliciting us to them, they are pleaſant or profitable; but we have ſeen already, that there are none of theſe obſtacles in the caſe whereof we are ſpeaking. The only difficulty in avoiding this ſin is, when it is grown into a habit, and become ſo familiar to us, that we commit it and ſcarce know that we commit it; but this caſe is ſo far from being any excuſe or extenuation of the crime, that it greatly aggravates it, and evinces the neceſſity of immediate repentance and reformation; and certainly you may reform and amend this vicious habit with as much or more facility and eaſe than you can any other. It is only reſolving to ſet a watch upon your words, and not to ſay any thing without thinking. You can command yourſelf ſurely what you will ſpeak; or if that is not in your power, it is in your power at leaſt to be ſilent. You can refrain in the company of your ſuperiors; and if at one time, why not at another? if upon

ſome

ſome occaſions, why not upon all? You can command yourſelf in the preſence of men whom you reverence; and why not in the more immediate preſence of the great and almighty God?

4. Conſider that it derogates greatly from a man's credit, and fruſtrates its own end and intention. The end and intention of ſwearing (if there is any end or intention at all) is, that the man may be ſooner believed, and perhaps may gain the reputation of wit and courage. But ſwearing and bluſtering are no more wit and courage than the exploſion of the gun doth the execution. Wit doth not want any ſuch ſeaſoning to make it reliſh, as inſtead of improving will ſpoil it; and true courage is always cool and ſedate, the greateſt bullies are ever the greateſt cowards. Nor will any man believe you more for ſwearing, but rather leſs. It may be perhaps that they who will not ſwear will lie; but it is certain that thoſe will lie who will ſwear. It is a tacit acknowlegement that you do not think your word ſufficient without an oath; and can you wonder that others ſuſpect your veracity, when you ſeem to queſtion it yourſelf? The word of a Chriſtian ſhould be as ſacred as his oath, and his promiſe as valid as his bond. If what you ſay is right, there is no need of an oath to confirm it; and if it is wrong, an oath will not make it better. Oaths are, like wagers, no argument but of folly in thoſe who employ them. A man of good character will be believed without them, and a man of ill character will not even with them be believed.

5. Conſider that as this vice is hurtful to a man's ſelf and derogates from his credit, ſo likewiſe is it offenſive to others, and contrary to all good manners and good breeding. It is offending not only againſt the religion, but againſt the laws of our country; and it is to be lamented that theſe laws are not put more ſtrictly in execution. It muſt be particularly offenſive, where there are any ſober ingenuous perſons in company, to hear that ſacred name profaned which they worſhip and adore. It is ſo diſſonant and ſhocking to all who have any ſparks of religion, that the ſon of Sirach might well ſay, (Ecclus XXVII. 14.) "The

(1) Lord Bacon relates ſomething of the ſame kind to the honor of Queen Elizabeth upon his own obſervation. In Dei mentionem vel communi ſermone incidens, fere ſemper creatoris nomen

" The talk of him that ſweareth much maketh the hair ſtand up-" right, and their brawls make one ſtop his ears." And would not any man of the leaſt good manners and good breeding ſcorn to do any thing, that ſhould ſo juſtly offend any body? It is therefore baniſhed from all civil and polite company; and even they, who practiſe it themſelves, muſt rather condemn than applaud it in others. It is ſure always (bad as the world is) to offend ſome and to pleaſe none.

6. Conſider that it leſſens the reverence of an oath, weakens its ſacredneſs and authority, and opens the way for all kinds of perjury. Forſwearing is the neceſſary conſequence of much ſwearing. For how is it poſſible for a man to ſwear almoſt to every thing, and not ſometimes to ſwear to that which is not true? How is it poſſible for a man to be continually making vows, and not to engage and involve himſelf in ſome raſh ones, and ſo either way become guilty whether he break or whether he keep them? How is it poſſible for a man to proſtitute oaths in his daily converſation, and at the ſame time to pay any reverence or regard to them in a court of judicature? If he can ſwear thus for nothing, will he make any ſcruple of doing it whenever it may be for his advantage? Such familiarity with oaths muſt breed contempt of oaths; and how much this will affect the intereſts of mankind, and ſhake the pillars of civil ſociety, and make even the foundations to tremble, no wiſe man needeth to be informed.

7 and laſtly, Conſider that as this vice is prejudicial to ſociety, ſo likewiſe is it the higheſt affront and indignity to almighty God; and as the offenſe is great, great will be the puniſhment. " Our Father " which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name" is part of our daily prayers; and doth the profane ſwearer never pray, or how do his prayers and his practice conſiſt and agree together? It is ſaid to the honor of the famous Mr. Boyle (1), that he never mentioned the name of God without a ſolemn pauſe in his diſcourſe; and what then ſhall we ſay of thoſe men, who lightly and impiouſly abuſe this holy

(1) nomen addidit; et oculos et vultum ad humilitatem et reverentiam quandam compoſuit, quod et ipſe ſæpe notavi. Bacon In Felicem Memoriam Elizabethæ. Vol. II. p. 393. Fol. Edit. 1730.

holy name, as an expletive to their unmeaning diſcourſe; or (what is worſe) as a ſanction to falſehood and lies? A moral Heathen, who hath only the light of nature to direct him, muſt tremble at ſuch irreverence and inſolence to the majeſty of heaven; and much leſs would any Chriſtian, one would think, admit ſuch wickedneſs in open defiance of the plaineſt and moſt expreſs prohibitions in the goſpel. It is, I know not how, a reproach peculiar to our Church and nation. You ſeldom or never hear any of our proteſtant brethren talk in this profane and impious manner: and call them preciſe if you pleaſe, yet it is greatly to be wiſhed that we would copy after them in this particular. Other ſins reflect diſhonor upon God by conſequence, but this is direct flying as it were in the face of omnipotence; and "the Lord will not hold them guiltleſs who" thus "take his name in vain." If puniſhment doth not overtake them here, yet it will certainly follow them hereafter, when (Jude 15.) "the Lord ſhall come with ten thouſand of his ſaints to exe-
"cute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly
"among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly
"committed, and of all their hard ſpeeches which ungodly ſinners
"have ſpoken againſt him." And this is the motive and argument with which St. James enforceth the prohibition; "Above all things
"my brethren ſwear not, but let your yea be yea, and your nay
"nay, leſt ye fall into condemnation." Nor indeed is any ſentence more juſt, than that they ſhould ſuffer that damnation, which they have ſo often wiſhed and called upon themſelves. Wherefore to conclude with the advice of the wiſe man, (Ecclus XXIII. 9, &c.)
"Accuſtom not thy mouth to ſwearing, neither uſe thyſelf to the
"naming of the holy one; for as a ſervant that is continually beaten
"ſhall not be without a blue mark, ſo he that ſweareth and nameth
"God continually ſhall not be faultleſs. A man that uſeth much
"ſwearing ſhall be filled with iniquity, and the plague ſhall never
"depart from his houſe; and if he ſwear in vain, he ſhall not be
"innocent, but his houſe ſhall be full of calamities. There is a
"word that is cloathed about with death; God grant that it be not

"found

" found in the heritage of Jacob, for all ſuch things ſhall be far " from the godly, and they ſhall not wallow in their ſins." In ſhort, " Uſe not thy mouth to intemperate ſwearing, for therein is " the word of ſin."

DISSERTATION XII.

On the LORD'S Prayer.

AMONG the many legacies, which our Saviour hath bequeathed to his Church, ſcarce any is more valuable than a perfect form of prayer. The mere natural man, without the light of revelation, knoweth not how to addreſs himſelf to heaven. (Micah VI. 6.) " Wherewith ſhall he come before the Lord, and bow himſelf be- " fore the high God?" He is unable of himſelf to aſk what is proper for himſelf. He is too ſhort-ſighted to diſcover the iſſues and events of things, to diſtinguiſh between what is and what is not for his intereſt, between what is ſuitable and unſuitable to the end of his being: And therefore it frequently happens, that what he conceives would make him miſerable, is the ready way to happineſs; and what he ſollicits as the deareſt bleſſing in expectation, would in poſſeſſion perhaps prove his greateſt curſe.

To ſupply this defect, and to remedy our infirmities, our bleſſed Saviour hath taught us not only what things we are to pray for, but alſo what words we are to pray in; hath not only deſcribed to us the manner, but given us the very form alſo, wherein we are to pray.—A form, little in words but great in ſubſtance; ſo ſhort, that the weakeſt memory may retain it; and yet ſo full, that it comprehends all things which relate either to ourſelves or others, to our

bodies or ſouls, to time or eternity.—A form, proper for all exigencies and occaſions, as well for the laſt ages of Chriſtianity, as the firſt; as well for the private devotions of the cloſet, as the public ſervice of the temple.—A form, that includes every part of religious worſhip, ſupplication and interceſſion, confeſſion and deprecation, reſignation and thankſgiving.—A form, adapted to all capacities, and ſuited to all conditions, equally proper for high and low, rich and poor; neither ſo lofty, as to ſurpaſs the apprehenſion of the meaneſt; nor on the other hand ſo low, as to incur the contempt of the greateſt; though ſublime yet plain, and though ſimple yet majeſtic; ſo that a heart truly devout cannot but be affected, very ſenſibly affected, by it. And it was fit indeed, that all ſhould underſtand, what all are alike concerned to repeat. For what ſtate and condition of life is there, to which it is not ſuitable, to which it is not neceſſary. (Mal. II. 10.) "Have we not all one Fa-"ther?" and muſt we not all reverence his holy name? Have we not all occaſion, as well high as low, rich as poor, to pray for our daily bread of him, (Luke I. 53.) "who feedeth the hungry with "good things and ſendeth the rich empty away?" Have we not all occaſion to aſk forgiveneſs of ſins, inaſmuch as (Rom. III. 23.) "all "have ſinned, and come ſhort of the glory of God?"—In a word, It is a form, that carries in it all the marks and characters of its divine author; One, who is "touched with the feeling of our infir-"mities," (Heb. IV. 15.) and ſin only excepted "was tempted in "all points like as we are" tempted; who beſt knew what was proper for us to aſk, or for God to beſtow; and who, we may be certain, will have a particular regard to thoſe prayers, which are offered in his name, and in his words. "Let us therefore (ver. 16.) come "boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and "find grace to help in time of need."

But that we may the better apprehend the beauties and excellences of this divine compoſure, let us take a diſtinct view of the ſeveral parts and members of it.

Our Father—We all along expreſs ourſelves in the plural number, not in the ſingular; which is the more remarkable, as every Chriſtian is directed to uſe this prayer privately and alone in his cloſet; we ſay *Our* Father, not *My* Father; to ſhow, that the power and mercies of God are univerſal, and univerſal too our benevolence and charity; that we love our "neighbour as ourſelves;" and that the whole body of Chriſtians, under their head Chriſt Jeſus, is knit together by ſuch joints and bands, that "if one member ſuffer, all "the members ſuffer with it; and if one member rejoice, all rejoice "with it." And how truly generous, how noble, how divine, is this ſpirit of Chriſtianity, which has no narrow views, no ſeparate intereſts; but conſiders the private good as involved in the public, and believes that we cannot more effectually promote the former, than by devoutly praying for the latter!

As to God's being ſtiled *our Father*, ſeveral are the grounds and reaſons of this appellation. He is our Father by creation, and we may cry out in the language of the prophet, (Iſ. LXIV. 8.) "O Lord thou "art our Father; we are the clay and thou our potter, and we all are "the work of thy hands." As He is our father by creation, ſo likewiſe is He by preſervation; it being as much the part of a parent, to train up his children, as to beget them, to make their being comfortable, as to give them a being at all. And we may ſay with the good pſalmiſt (XXXVI. 6, 7.) "O Lord, thou preſerveſt man and beaſt. "How excellent is thy loving kindneſs, O God! therefore the chil-"dren of men put their truſt under the ſhadow of thy wings." But theſe relations are founded in nature, there are others founded in grace; theſe belong to us as men in general, the others appertain to us particularly as Chriſtians. We are his ſons by regeneration; for (James I. 17, 18.) "the father of lights of his own will begat us with the word "of truth." We were born in ſin, and naturally are children of wrath; but through the principles of the goſpel we are born again unto righteouſneſs, and become children of grace. We are his ſons by adoption: and as under the Roman law the adopted perſons called the adopter Father, even ſo we (Rom. VIII. 15.) "having received the "ſpirit

" ſpirit of adoption, cry Abba Father." And being his ſons by regeneration and adoption, we may become his ſons in glory, (ver. 17. Col. III. 24. Heb. IX. 15.) " his heirs, coheirs with Chriſt, receiv-" ing the promiſe and reward of the eternal inheritance."

And now, what title could have been choſen ſo proper, ſo engaging as this, ſo compaſſionate to our wants, ſo ſuitable to the nature and end of prayer? Had we been taught to addreſs God by his other attributes, they might have overawed and confounded us, but in conſideration of our weakneſs he diveſts himſelf, as it were, of theſe, and is pleaſed to be repreſented to us under the moſt tender, the moſt affectionate of characters. How many endearing relations are included in this term, *Father!* Doth it not on our part imply all filial truſt, all reverence, all duty? Doth it not on God's part promiſe all paternal indulgence, all pity, all love? What can give more life and ſpirit to our devotions? What can be a ſurer pledge and earneſt of our ſucceſs? " For, (Matt. VII. 11.) if we, being evil, know how to give good " gifts unto our children, how much more ſhall our Father, which is " in heaven, give good things to them that aſk him?"

Which art in heaven—This, I conceive, was inſerted to diſtinguiſh from all earthly relations, and to remind us of that reverence, that humility, wherewith it becomes man to approach God, the creature to come before his creator. " Be not raſh with thy mouth, and let not " thy heart be haſty to utter any thing before God," ſaith the royal preacher, (Eccl. V. 2.) and then giveth this reaſon for it, " for God " is in heaven, and thou upon earth."

But here we muſt not be led (as theſe words perhaps may lead us) to imagin the Deity confined to this or that place. He is truly and neceſſarily infinite, and (2 Chron. VI. 18.) " heaven, and the heaven of " heavens cannot contain him." But though he is every where preſent, every where the ſame, yet he manifeſts himſelf in ſome places more particularly than in others. The univerſe is his temple, but heaven is the holy of holies; the one is the court and palace, the other (if I may ſo call it) the preſence-room of the " King of Kings, and " Lord of Lords."

Hallowed

Hallowed be thy name—It is obſervable, that our firſt concern is (as indeed in reaſon it ought to be) for what relates to God, before what reſpects ourſelves; that we pray for his glory, even before we aſk for our own neceſſaries; ever remembring (Matt. VI. 33.) that if we "ſeek "firſt the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs, all theſe things ſhall "be added unto us."

In this petition we expreſs our hearty deſires that God may not be blaſphemed among us, but that he may be worſhipped with holy worſhip. For it is uſual in the eaſtern languages to make the name ſtand for the perſon; and praying for the ſanctification of the one, is praying for the ſanctification of the other. Praiſing or bleſſing the *name* of God is praiſing or bleſſing *God himſelf*; and calling upon the *name* of the Lord is the ſame as calling upon the *Lord*. "Sanctify the Lord "himſelf," ſaith the prophet Iſaiah, (VIII. 13.) "and let him be "your fear, and let him be your dread." And in another place, (XXIX. 23.) "ſanctifying the name of the Lord, and ſanctifying the "Holy one of Jacob," are with him equivalent terms. In the writings of Moſes (Levit. XXIV. 11.) to "blaſpheme the name" is to blaſpheme God, and "to fear the glorious and fearful name" is explained "to "fear the Lord thy God." (Deut. XXVIII. 58.) We muſt therefore look upon all abuſes of his name, as indignities offered to his being itſelf: all violation of the former we muſt eſteem an open contempt and defiance of the latter. What then ſhall we ſay of thoſe, who are ſuppoſed to offer up this petition every day, and yet every day (almoſt every moment) make it void and of none effect, by taking the name of God in vain; by curſing and ſwearing, by perjury and blaſphemy? We know what reverence the Jews paid to the holy name; and ſhall it be profaned by us Chriſtians? It was never pronounced among them but upon the moſt ſolemn, the moſt ſacred occaſions: and ſhall we uſe it in jeſting and ridicule, in anger and paſſion? No: (Pſal. XCVI. 8. CXLVIII. 12.) "Let us give the Lord the honor due "unto his name; for his name only is excellent, and his praiſe above "heaven and earth."

Thy

Thy kingdom come—What in ſome places of ſcripture is called the "kingdom of God," in others is called "the kingdom of Chriſt," in others "the kingdom of heaven;" and all of them mean the evangelical diſpenſation, begun in grace here and conſummated in glory hereafter, as is evident from ſeveral prophecies in the Old Teſtament, and from ſeveral parables in the New. In praying therefore that this kingdom may come, we pray in effect, that (2 Theſſ. III. 1.) "the "word of the Lord may have free courſe, and be glorified:" that (Matt. XXIV. 14.) "the goſpel of the kingdom may be preached in "all the world for a witneſs unto all nations;" that (1 Tim. II. 4.) "all men may be ſaved, and come to the knowlege of the truth." Such is the pride and obſtinacy of the Jews, ſuch the looſeneſs and ſenſuality of the Mohammedans, ſuch the blindneſs and ignorance of the Heathens, in ſhort ſuch is the ignorance or wickedneſs of mankind, that the greateſt part of the world now lieth in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death, not knowing the ſaving truths of the goſpel, not viſited by the glorious beams of the ſun of righteouſneſs. The ſcripture indeed aſſures us, that the Chriſtian religion will one time or other become univerſal; and our ardent requeſt is that it may become ſo ſpeedily, that (John X. 16.) we may become "one fold under one "ſhepherd," and that (Rev. XI. 15.) "the kingdoms of this world "may become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Chriſt, and he "may reign for ever and ever."

But the kingdom of Chriſt not properly being of "this world," we muſt extend our views ſtill farther; and beſeech almighty God, that he would pleaſe of his gracious goodneſs ſhortly to accompliſh the number of his elect, and haſten the kingdom of his dear Son; that when our Saviour ſhall come in his glory to judge the world, he may ſay to us all, (Matt. XXV. 34.) "Come ye bleſſed of my father in"herit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the "world. (Rev. XXII. 20.) Amen: Even ſo come Lord Jeſus, come "quickly."

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven—That is may we *on earth* execute the divine commands, as willingly, as readily, as conſtantly,

ſtantly, as perfectly in our natures, as the holy angels *in heaven* do in theirs; thoſe "miniſters of his who do his pleaſure," as the pſalmiſt (Pſal. CIII. 20, 21.) informs us, "and hearken unto the voice of his "words." It is indeed moſt reaſonable, that not our will, but his ſhould be done by us. Ours is all humour and caprice, all irreſolution and weakneſs, all vanity and ſin: His is juſt and perfect, fixt and unchangeable, directed by infinite wiſdom, and ſupported by infinite power, and recommended by infinite goodneſs. And ſurely We (vile ſinful duſt and aſhes) cannot think much of paying that tribute of obedience, which is paid by thoſe glorious ſpirits, beings much nobler and ſuperior than ourſelves. Eſpecially ſince our compliance with the bleſſed will of God is the beſt, the only means of making us eaſy here and happy hereafter. And who, to follow his humour, would forfeit his eaſe and happineſs? Who, to gratify a ſhort-lived luſt and paſſion, would become obnoxious to everlaſting miſery?

Hitherto we have explained that part of the prayer, which reſpects *God*; and herein we may obſerve a beautiful gradation, the ſeveral petitions riſing, as it were, ſtep by ſtep, one above another. We deſire firſt to ſanctify his name, which is our duty as we are *men*: We deſire 2dly to ſerve him in his kingdom, as *Chriſtians*: And aſpiring after ſtill greater degrees of perfection, we deſire 3dly to do his will as do the bleſſed *Angels*. We come in the next place to conſider thoſe petitions which have a more immediate relation to *ourſelves*; and here we pray for our daily ſuſtenance; and then for the pardon of all paſt ſins, and the prevention of all future.

Give us this day our daily bread—We pray not for any dainties, or ſuperfluities, but only for a ſufficient competency to our being and ſupport in the world. *Bread* in Hebrew comprehends food and maintenance; and perhaps, this petition, τον αρτον ἡμων τον επιουσιον δος ἡμιν σημερον or το καθ' ἡμεραν as in St. Luke, had better be tranſlated thus, *Our ſufficient bread give us this day* or *day by day*. For the word will admit of this ſenſe, (1) επιουσιος from επι την ουσιαν, neceſſary to our

(1) See Mede's Diſcourſe on Agur's prayer p. 125. and alſo Etym. Magn.

being and ſuſtenance; and hereby a ſeeming tautology is avoided. All circumſtances indeed conſidered, the happineſs of life conſiſts not in the nicety or abundance of the things a man eateth and drinketh. Nature is ſatisfied with a little. The revels of the drunkard, and the feaſtings of the Epicure are of all delights the moſt periſhing, the moſt groſs, the moſt beaſtly. They ſerve for nothing but to beget diſeaſes and to cloud our underſtandings. A plain ſimple diet is more for our health, more for our pleaſure. A moderate uſe of the creatures is the only true enjoyment.

And even for this bread we are not ſollicitous beyond the time preſent. Our wiſhes are all confined within the circle of *a day*. We know that we are ever in the hands of a bountiful father and gracious preſerver: and why ſhould we be too anxious for the concerns of this world, when we are ignorant how ſoon we may be ſummoned out of it? What would it profit us, with the rich man in the parable, (Luke XII. 19, 20.) to "have much goods laid up for many years," if with him too "our ſouls ſhould be required of us this very night?" But after all our care, all our providence, we are generally never the nearer the center of our aims, the point of our deſires. There are a thouſand little accidents, which we cannot foreſee, and if we foreſee, we cannot prevent. (Matt. VI. 34.) "Take therefore no thought," be not ſollicitous "for the morrow; for the morrow ſhall take thought "for the things of itſelf: ſufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us—The place in St. Matthew hath *debts*, that in St. Luke hath *treſpaſſes* or *ſins*; but though they differ in words, yet in meaning they are the ſame. For all *ſins* are *debts*, of puniſhment to God, of reſtitution to men, or both; and therefore one of theſe may be put not improperly for the other.

Our forgiving the injuries done us by others we here make the condition, whereby ourſelves expect forgiveneſs from God. And this ſurely implies (1 Tim. II. 8.) that we "lift up holy hands without wrath;" that we harbour no revenge, no malice in our boſoms. For ſhould our lips contradict our hearts, it would be ſtrange prevarication with omniſ-

omniſcience, we ſhould not pray for mercy but for judgment, and bring down a curſe upon our heads, inſtead of a bleſſing. But if we are hearty, if we are ſincere in our requeſt, we may reſt perfectly ſatisfied of pardon and ſucceſs. For our Saviour expreſly ſubjoins as the reaſon of this petition, and it is the only petition for which he aſſigns a reaſon, that "if we forgive men their treſpaſſes, our heavenly Fa-"ther will alſo forgive us: but if we forgive not men their treſpaſſes, "neither will our Father forgive our treſpaſſes."

Lead us not into temptation—We muſt not imagin, that ever God actually leadeth men into temptation, for the ſcripture informs us, (James I. 13.) that "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither "tempteth he any man." He is then ſaid indeed, to lead us into temptation, when only he ſuffers us to be tempted: for in the language of ſcripture God is frequently ſaid to *do* thoſe things, which he *permits* to be done.

Neither muſt we hope to live wholly exempt from temptations. Every age, every condition of life is beſet with them; and there is no poſſibility of being delivered from them, but only by death. So that the purport of this petition plainly is, that (1 Cor. X. 13.) "God "would not ſuffer us to be tempted above what we are able; but "would with the temptation alſo make a way to eſcape, that we may "be able to bear it."

But deliver us from evil—There are two meanings of the word *evil*. It may ſignify all evil in general, or in particular the evil one, the principle and fountain of all evil. The Greek original will naturally lead us into the latter of theſe ſenſes; and the Latin and Engliſh verſions into the former.

If we take it in the former ſenſe, we deſire God to deliver us from evil, without expreſly naming what is ſo, leaving that to be determined by his infinite wiſdom, which judges better for us than we can for ourſelves, and will (Eph. III. 20.) "do for us exceeding abundantly "above all that we can aſk or think." If we take it in the latter ſenſe, the petition is ſtill much the ſame, and differs only as the cauſe from its effect. For moſt of thoſe evils, which happen unto man-

kind, are effected, I conceive, by the permiſſion indeed of God, but by the agency of the Devil and his inſtruments. He is our great "adverſary," (1 Pet. V. 8.) and "walketh about, as a roaring lion, "ſeeking whom he may devour:" But yet we may comfort ourſelves, that he is never out of the eye or reach of an all-wiſe providence, and (1 John IV. 4.) "greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the "world."

The Doxology we find in St. Matthew, and not in St. Luke; and accordingly our Church retains it in one part of her office, and omits it in another. The prayer being delivered at different times, might occaſion its being delivered thus differently; and in truth the Doxology is not ſo properly a part of the prayer, as an appendix to it. The meaning of it is ſo plain and obvious, that it needeth no comment or explanation. It will be ſufficient to produce as its parallel the rapturous thankſgiving of king David; (1 Chron. XXIX. 11, 12.) "Thine, O Lord, is the greatneſs, and the power, and the glory, and "the victory, and the majeſty; for all that is in the heaven and the "earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted "as head above all: Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou "reigneſt over all, and in thine hand is power and might, and in thine "hand it is to make great, and to give ſtrength unto all."

Thus have we gone through the ſeveral parts of this divine prayer, and the more we conſider it, the more reaſon we ſhall have to admire it. It remains only that we deduce three or four general obſervations from it, and ſo conclude.

1. Firſt then we may obſerve that this prayer was deſigned to be of perpetual uſe in the Church. This ſome modern Sectaries have denied, but with what reaſon it is not eaſy to apprehend. We ſhow that it is plainly enacted by divine authority; and they muſt ſhow that it is ſince by divine authority as plainly repealed. But this they cannot ſo much as pretend. All the commands of Chriſt are unlimited and univerſal, unleſs the nature of the thing confine them to particular times, and to particular perſons: This prayer (as I have before ſhown) is proper for all times, and for all perſons; and therefore is to be uſed in all times by

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2. It has been remarked by ſeveral learned men, that our Saviour has ſelected moſt of theſe petitions from the prayers then in uſe among the Jews, and out of them all has compoſed this one excellent and conſummate piece. Now in this very thing we may perceive the great temper and moderation of our Saviour, that he came not to deſtroy the old religion, but to fulfil it; and was not ſo much an innovator of worſhip, as an improver and perfector. The moderation our Saviour hath ſhown in this reſpect towards the Jews, the ſame have our reformers ſhown towards the Church of Rome. They have rejected whatever in her liturgy was ſuperſtitious or idolatrous; but what was juſt and good, what was truly pious and devout, that they

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have retained. And indeed the Church of England hath been all along actuated by the ſame ſpirit. She forſakes the errors of the Church of Rome, not the Church of Rome herſelf. She reforms only what is amiſs in her, what is right in her ſhe receives.

3. Hence we may learn the lawfulneſs and expediency of ſet forms of prayer. For not to inſiſt on the many arguments which may be properly enough alleged to prove, that ſet forms of prayer are lawful and expedient: not to urge that Moſes preſcribed ſet forms to the Jews: that John taught his diſciples to pray in ſet forms: that ſet forms are confirmed by the practice of the Apoſtles and uſage of the Church in all ages: that the worſhip of the Church triumphant in heaven, as we are aſſured by ſcripture, (Iſ. VI. Rev. IV.) conſiſts in ſet forms: that ſet forms are more for the glory of God, more for the edification of the Church than extemporary: not to inſiſt on theſe topics, I ſay, the argument drawn from this prayer is almoſt of force to convince the moſt prejudiced underſtanding. For what greater authority can we have for any thing than the command and example of our Saviour? Had ſet forms of prayer been any ſtinting of the ſpirit, any quenching of devotion, would our Saviour have given a ſet form to his diſciples? Would he ſo far have authorized premeditated prayer, had the ends of religion been better ſerved by extemporary? He certainly who was God as well as man, could not fail to recommend that manner of worſhip, which was moſt convenient to man, and moſt agreeable to God.

4. Hence we may learn in what manner we ought to pray. This prayer was deſigned for general uſe; but every man hath wants ſo particular, ſo properly his own, that particular prayers are ſometimes neceſſary. Now in the compoſing of theſe, what exemplar can we ſo fitly propoſe to ourſelves, as this which the Son of God hath ſet before us? It is not only perfect in itſelf, but may greatly contribute to the perfection of our prayers alſo. The diſtinguiſhing characters of it are a comprehenſive ſhortneſs and majeſtic ſimplicity; and theſe, in a ſingular manner, deſerve our regard and imitation. A majeſtic ſimplicity: for that is the genuin effect of true devotion. God is not to be won by tropes and figures. Omnipotence and Omniſcience are not moved

moved by thoſe little arts of deceit, which ſtrike the fancies and work upon the paſſions of men. A comprehenſive ſhortneſs: for (Matt. VI. 8.) "our Father knoweth what things we have need of before we aſk him." And tedious circumlocutions and idle repetitions, inſtead of inlivening and inflaming our devotion, render it cold and lifeleſs. They generally ſavor more of hypocriſy than of ſubſtantial piety; and we read in ſcripture (Matt. XXIII. 14.) of thoſe who "made long prayers, and "yet devoured widows houſes." I need not obſerve how exactly the Church of England hath followed theſe rules in compiling her liturgy. We may ſafely challenge any Church in the whole Chriſtian world to produce ſo many copies, which ſo nearly reſemble this divine original.

To conclude—God hath promiſed (1 John V. 14.) "to hear us, if "we aſk any thing according to his will:" and ſurely we then pray "according to his will," when we pray in the form, which he himſelf hath inſpired and taught. We ſhould only remember to treat it always with that reverence, which is due to it, as coming from God; and then we may reſt aſſured, that what we faithfully aſk in Chriſt's words, will effectually be granted for Chriſt's ſake.

DISSERTATION XIII.

On the daily SERVICE of the CHURCH.

NO Moral or religious truth can be more evident than that it is the duty of man as the creature dependent and indigent to worſhip God as his creator, preſerver, benefactor: And as reaſon is that we ſhould worſhip him in private as private perſons, ſo as members of ſociety we are obliged to worſhip him in a more public manner in ſociety. Our private devotions are left to every one's diſcretion, that he may make

make uſe of his own thoughts and language, or borrow and apply the compoſitions of others: but our public prayers, as they are deſigned for the uſe of the nation, are appointed by the wiſdom and authority of the nation; and our Church is diſtinguiſhed in nothing more than her excellent liturgy, which is the quinteſſence of ancient liturgies and an improvement upon them; and if the pſalmiſt ſaid it of the Jewiſh ſervice, we may well apply it to the Chriſtian (Pſal. XCVI. 9.) "O worſhip the Lord in the beauty of holineſs."

But bleſſings which are common are apt to be overlooked and neglected; and perſons not rightly qualified and diſpoſed, by hearing the beſt things often, come not to mind them at laſt. It is certain that the duty of public prayer was never ſo much neglected as at preſent; and though the ſervice of our Church is without doubt the beſt in the world, yet it is neither frequented as it ought to be, nor duly attended to by all thoſe who do frequent it; and both perhaps for want of its being better underſtood. The thought occurred to me therefore, that it might be proper, for the awakening of our attention and reminding us of our duty, to examin the frame and compoſition of our liturgy as far as it can be examined in one of theſe diſcourſes, to take a diſtinct view of the ſeveral parts of it, to inquire into their fitneſs and propriety, and conſider what ſort of behaviour is requiſite and becoming, while we are performing each part of this holy exerciſe. Such a ſurvey, as it muſt be ſhort, ſo muſt be general, and cannot deſcend to many particulars. For thoſe you muſt have recourſe to authors who have written expreſly upon the ſubject, ſuch as the famous Hooker, Dr. Nicholls, Mr. Wheatly and others. You may however form ſome judgment of the excellence of a work by viewing only the general plan and outline of it.

Let it be then our firſt care and concern to be preſent at the *beginning* of the ſervice. We ſhould manifeſt the ſame readineſs and alacrity which the good pſalmiſt expreſſed, when he ſaid (Pſal. CXXII. 1.) "I was glad when they ſaid unto me, Let us go into the houſe of the "Lord." There is no part of our common prayer, but is worthy of our attendence; and to ſay the beſt, there is an indecency in coming late.

late. It is not only maiming your own devotions; but you disturb others, you call off their eyes and observation, and greatly incommode those especially who are near you.

At our first coming into Church it is usual for every one to offer up a short prayer unto God for his blessing upon our present undertaking; and the custom is very decent and laudable, provided we come, as we ought always to come, before the service begins. But if you happen to stay till afterwards, it is better omitted; you have lost time already, and you should lose no more in your private devotions, when the public offices demand your attention. Your private devotions you may exercise at another time and in another place; but every thing of a private nature must yield to what concerns the public.

As Prayer is a duty which requires some preparation of mind, that we may not enter upon it abruptly or lightly, the minister begins with a solemn *exhortation*, which he introduces with one or more sentences of scripture; very proper to incite and encourage returning sinners. We *stand*, while the exhortation is read, to show our attention; and attention here is all that is required of us. Attention will beget devotion. Let us lift up our hearts unto the exhortation, the exhortation will lift up our hearts unto God.

When our minds are rightly prepared and disposed, then we confess our sins unto God, and after the *confession* in natural order follows the *absolution* or remission of sins: and with what can our devotions begin more properly, or how can we apply for future blessings, before we have asked and are assured of pardon and forgiveness for what is past? It cannot be objected to this form of confession and absolution that they are any relics of popery. For they were not borrowed from popish liturgies, as some other parts of our service were; but were first inserted in the second edition of the book of Common Prayer, which was drawn up in Edward the sixth's time with the assistance and advice of some foreign presbyterian ministers. The popish confession and absolution are private between the penitent and the priest alone: these are public in the face of the whole congregation. The popish absolution is authoritative and absolute in the name of the priest: this

is conditional, in the name of God, to *them that truly repent and unfeignedly believe his holy goſpel.* The confeſſion includes both ſins of omiſſion and commiſſion, and is as full and particular, as a general confeſſion can be made; and it is eaſy, while you are confeſſing ſins in general with others, to think of your own ſins in particular. Your words are the words of the congregation, but your thoughts are your own. The confeſſion we repeat all *kneeling*, as that is the poſture of humiliation; but the abſolution or remiſſion of ſins the prieſt pronounceth *ſtanding*, as he is then ſpeaking authoritatively in the name and by the commiſſion of God. The confeſſion we ſhould take care to *repeat* after the miniſter, but ſtill *with an humble voice* as the exhortation directs us; but the abſolution or remiſſion of ſins is to be pronounced by the *prieſt alone*, and we ſhould attend with reverend ſilence, and not as the manner of ſome is, repeat it after him. In the confeſſion the miniſter addreſſeth himſelf with us to God, but in the abſolution he is ſpeaking to us from God, and therefore is to ſpeak alone, and to repeat it after him can be the effect of nothing but ignorance. We are only to declare our belief and aſſent in an *Amen* at laſt.

As we hope and pray for the remiſſion of ſins through the merits of Chriſt, ſo we farther recommend and enforce our petitions by praying in the form which he himſelf hath taught us; and as this form was given for the uſe of all Chriſtians, ſo it is injoined that in the public offices it ſhould be repeated by all. *The Lord's prayer* always made a part of Chriſtian worſhip both public and private; and indeed how can we better ſupply the defects of human compoſures than by a prayer that is confeſſedly of divine original? But let us take care, while we thus "honor God with our lips, that our hearts are not far "from him." As we are to *love* God, ſo we ſhould *worſhip* him, "with all the heart, and with all the mind, and with all the ſoul, and "with all the ſtrength."

From acts of humiliation we very properly turn to acts of praiſe, from acknowleging our own unworthineſs to the acknowlegement of the divine attributes; and with equal propriety we praiſe God in the *pſalms* and *hymns*, and ſhow forth his glory, before we pray unto him

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in the *collects*, and aſk for the ſupply of our own wants and neceſſities. Praiſe after humiliation is grateful viciſſitude, like ſunſhine after rain; and miniſter and people mutually ſtir up each other with the words which good David uſed upon a like occaſion. Having raiſed ourſelves, as we are baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of Holy Ghoſt, we give glory to them in that ancient *doxology*, which was in uſe indeed before, but hath conſtantly been uſed in the Church, ſince the times of the Arian hereſy. And then the miniſter calleth upon the people *Praiſe ye the Lord*, which is the Engliſh of *Hallelujah*, a word in uſe in the Old and New Teſtament as well as in all liturgies; and the people, to teſtify their aſſent and readineſs, anſwer again *The Lord's name be praiſed.*

The 95*th pſalm* is uſed by way of introduction to the reſt, and was employed as ſuch probably in the Jewiſh Church; at leaſt as ſuch it hath been employed now for ſeveral ages in the Chriſtian; and the matter is as pertinent and proper as if it had been compoſed for that purpoſe. What God threatened to the rebellious Iſraelites, *that they ſhould not enter into his reſt*, is as juſtly applicable to diſobedient Chriſtians. The *pſalms* are an excellent treaſure-houſe of all devotion for perſons of all conditions and upon all occaſions. They very fitly make a part of our worſhip as they did formerly of the public ſervice of the temple, and ſtill of the Jewiſh ſynagogues; and at the end of each we repeat the doxology to appropriate them ſtill more to Chriſtian worſhip, and of legal to improve them into evangelical offices. The uſe of the old tranſlation is ſtill retained, becauſe the people having been long habituated to it, it would not have been eaſy and agreeable to change it; and though in ſome reſpects it may be much inferior to the new tranſlation, yet in others it hath plainly the advantage of it, and there is no very material difference between them. It is ordered by the diviſion of the pſalms into a monthly courſe, that we have neither too few nor too many at a time; and we read them more, as they are more devotional than other parts of ſcripture. The ſubjects indeed are various, ſome penitential, ſome joyful; but the general ſtrain is joy, and even the moſt mournful afford ſome ground at leaſt

of praiſe: and how can we praiſe God more effectually and more properly than in pſalms and hymns dictated by the Spirit of God? We repeat them *alternately*, and we repeat them *ſtanding*, as hath been the practice from the earlieſt ages. "All Iſrael ſtood," while they recited the pſalms, ſays the ſacred hiſtorian; (2 Chron. VII. 6.) and erection of body is the poſture of praiſe, and beſt denotes elevation of ſoul.

After the pſalms follow the *leſſons* and *hymns*, and theſe are intermixed for the ſake of variety, and by variety to relieve and aſſiſt the mind. For in the leſſons our minds are only attentive, in the hymns they are active; the former are more the employment of our heads, the latter of our hearts; the former exerciſe our underſtandings, the latter require our affections. The poſture of the body is alſo varied, as well as of the mind; for no particular poſture being preſcribed, we *ſit* uſually during the former, and we *ſtand* during the latter, for the ſame reaſon that we repeat the pſalms *ſtanding*. The ſcriptures were always read in the congregations of the faithful both Jews and Chriſtians; and by the appointment of two leſſons every day out of each, it is ſo contrived that we read over the Old Teſtament once every year, and the New Teſtament thrice. Upon particular occaſions proper leſſons as well as proper pſalms are appointed; ſo that ſome particular parts are appointed to be read oftener, as other ſome are omitted not being of ſueh general uſe and edification. Some leſſons are taken out of the apocryphal books, but it was never intended to put them upon a level with ſcripture; they are read only as containing ſeveral uſeful good moral precepts and inſtructions, and having been read in the congregations from early antiquity, they could not perhaps at the Reformation have been entirely laid aſide without giving offenſe. The hymns are taken from ſcripture, and have therefore the ſanction and authority of ſcripture; all except St. Ambroſe's hymn called *Te Deum* and the following canticle, *Bleſs ye the Lord praiſe him and magnify him for ever*; which is the ſong of the three holy children in the fiery furnace, and is ſcarce ever uſed in our pariſh-churches, and very ſeldom in our cathedrals, where the muſic recommends it. Of the hymn called *Te Deum* I think it may be ſaid with juſtice, that of any thing uninſpired

inſpired it moſt reſembles inſpiration. The thoughts are as ſublime as the language is plain, and there is no human compoſition that approacheth nearer to divine.

As "faith cometh by hearing," (Rom. X. 17.) ſo after hearing the word of God we make profeſſion of our faith in *the Apoſtles creed*, ſo called as being a ſummary of their doctrin. We rehearſe it *ſtanding* to ſignify our reſolution to ſtand up in its defenſe, and (Jude 3.) to "contend earneſtly "for the faith which was once delivered unto the ſaints;" and we rehearſe it *every one aloud*, (Rom. X. 10.) "for with the heart man be-"lieveth unto righteouſneſs and with the mouth confeſſion is made unto "ſalvation." As the confeſſion of faith is fitly made *after* the leſſons, ſo it is made as fitly *before* we offer up our prayers unto God, for as the apoſtle ſays, (ver. 14.) "How ſhall they call on him in whom they have not believed?"

Our prayers begin with the *Lord's prayer* as the foundation and ſtandard of all others; and having repeated it before as it is in St. Matthew's, we repeat it now as it is delivered in St. Luke's goſpel, without the doxology at the end. Both before and after the Lord's prayer there are ſeveral *verſicles* and *reſponſes*. Thoſe *before* the Lord's prayer are to ſtir up our devotion, and uſher in our prayers with a *threefold* invocation in token of the greater earneſtneſs, and perhaps in alluſion to the trinity, and therefore it is wrong for the clerk and the people to repeat it a fourth time as is done in ſome congregations. Thoſe *after* the Lord's prayer are taken moſtly out of the pſalms, and are the ſum and ſubſtance of the collects which follow. They are as it were the text, and the collects are a ſort of paraphraſe upon them; and it is ordered that the miniſter repeat them *ſtanding*, I ſuppoſe that the people may hear more diſtinctly when to make their proper reſponſes.

The *collects* probably are ſo intitled as being collected chiefly out of ſcripture and out of ancient liturgies and fathers. They are moſt of them of great antiquity, ſome being borrowed from the Greek ſervice, but more from a work of St. Gregory the great, who was Biſhop of Rome at the latter end of the 6th century, and reſtored Chriſtianity in this country among our Saxon anceſtors, after the Britiſh Church had been ruined and Paganiſm had again over-

ſpread

ſpread the land: and they were not his productions neither, for he profeſſeth to have borrowed them from other ancient liturgies, ſo that in all probability they are derived to us by this channel from the firſt and pureſt ages. But they are not only valuable for their antiquity, but much more for their form and matter. We pray for ourſelves, for our ſpiritual and temporal welfare, and then for others, for the king and the royal family, for the clergy and the people, for the parlament during their ſeſſion, and finally for all ſorts and conditions of men. The compilers of our liturgy ſeem to have taken for their pattern that precept of the apoſtle, where he directs (1 Tim. II. 1, &c.) that "ſupplications and prayers be made for all men, "for kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a "quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty: for this," ſhys he "is good and acceptable in the ſight of God our Saviour, "who would have all men to be ſaved and to come unto the know-"lege of the truth."

On ſome occaſions, as Wedneſday and Friday which are faſt-days our Saviour being betrayed on the one and crucified on the other, and on Sundays when there is a larger congregation, the *litany* or general ſupplication is appointed to be read inſtead of ſome of the collects; and the matter is much the ſame, only the litany is larger and more particular, and urged with greater reiteration and importunity. And this method of joint-ſupplication, the miniſter repeating one part and the people the other, is very ancient; for our litany itſelf is ſo. We are indebted for it to the ſame perſon as we are for many of the collects, our's being an improvement upon St. Gregory's, as his was upon the ancient litanies before him. And a compleater general ſupplication there cannot be. He muſt be very wandring whom it will not fix; he muſt be very cold whom it will not warm; and he muſt either be a very good or a very bad man, whom it will not improve, and who will not riſe better from it than he came to it. It is a ſervice almoſt of itſelf; and this as well as the reſt of the prayers we repeat *kneeling*, to ſhow the greater lowlineſs, reverence, and devotion.

After

After the general ſupplication follows the *general thankſgiving*; after having prayed unto God for future bleſſings, we return him thanks for his mercies already beſtowed upon us. We had praiſed him before in the pſalms and hymns for his glorious works of every kind; but here we *thank* him, properly ſpeaking, for his goodneſs as to mankind in general, ſo to ourſelves in particular. Then we ſum up all our petitions in *the prayer of St. Chryſoſtom*, referring it to the divine wiſdom to judge what is moſt expedient for us; and as ſeveral of the prayers are taken from the Latin ſervice, this and ſome others are very fitly borrowed from the Greek, that our liturgy might participate of the beauties and excellencies of the Eaſtern and Weſtern Churches, and at the ſame time we might ſhow our willingneſs to hold communion with both. We conclude this firſt ſervice, as St. Paul concludes one of his epiſtles, only we make a *prayer* of that which he by his apoſtolical authority pronounced as a *benediction*.

The *ſecond ſervice* is read only on Sundays and Holidays, for then people may reaſonably be ſuppoſed to be more at leiſure, and more ſolemn offices of devotion are requiſite on more ſolemn occaſions. It was originally intended for the celebration of the Lord's ſupper; and therefore is called alſo the *communion ſervice*, and in moſt places is ſtill read at the communion table: and indeed it is to be wiſhed, that at leaſt as often as it was read, there was a communion. It begins in the moſt proper and becoming manner, for how can we better approach the Lord's table than with *the Lord's prayer?* We pray next for purity of heart, for (Matt. V. 8.) "the pure in heart ſhall "ſee God;" and as this is a neceſſary qualification for all religious worſhip, ſo more particularly for the moſt ſolemn part of it. Then the miniſter rehearſeth the *ten commandments*, and rehearſeth them *ſtanding* as ſpeaking from God; and the congregation all *kneeling* beg pardon for the paſt and grace for the future. There follows a prayer for the *King* as the guardian of theſe and all our laws; and the *collect* for the day together with the *epiſtle* and *goſpel*, which are the choiceſt portions of ſcripture applicable to the times and occaſions: and as the epiſtles are only the writings of men, but the goſpels contain

contain the diſcourſes and actions of the Son of God, we therefore *ſtand up* at the reading of the goſpel to ſhow the greater regard and veneration. For the ſame reaſon that we rehearſe the Apoſtles creed, or the Latin as we may call it, after the Leſſons, we rehearſe the Greek or *the Nicene creed*, which is a larger confeſſion of faith, after the epiſtle and goſpel.

The confeſſion of faith is properly ſucceeded by a *ſermon*, ſtill more to confirm our faith and improve our manners. And of the excellency of the Engliſh ſermons there is no need to ſay any thing. They are not like the unpremeditated eſſays and rhapſodies of ancient or modern enthuſiaſm, ſome ſenſe perhaps but much more nonſenſe, one part religion and three parts rant and blaſphemy, pretending to inſpiration but inſpired with nothing but ſpiritual pride and madneſs. They are not like the lean homilies and legendary diſcourſes in the Church of Rome, teaching virtues which are no virtues, and extolling ſaints who were no ſaints, or perhaps never exiſted. They are allowed by foreigners themſelves to be ſuperior to thoſe of all other nations. And indeed of ſome of them it is no more than juſtice to ſay, that they are not only the moſt complete treatiſes of morality and divinity, but alſo the moſt perfect pieces of oratory, and ſtandards of good ſtile and fine writing.

After the ſermon *the prayer for the whole ſtate of Chriſt's Church militant here on earth* includes almoſt all that we have prayed for before; and the miniſter ſubjoins a proper *collect* or two, and concludes with a ſolemn *benediction*. And theſe as well as the reſt of the prayers we ſhould take care not to repeat after the miniſter and thereby diſturb others, but only accompany him with our minds, and at the end of each prayer anſwer *Amen* as the rubric directs us.

You may probably have obſerved that there is ſome repetition and tautology, and that we pray for ſeveral things again in the *ſecond* ſervice which we had prayed for before in the *firſt:* but then you ſhould conſider that theſe two ſervices were not deſigned to be read both at the ſame time; the one uſed to be read early in the morning, and the other beginning with the litany ſome hours afterwards; and this cuſtom

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is ſtill kept up in ſome of our Cathedral and Collegiate Churches. Such is the remiſſneſs and negligence of the age, that few perſons would be willing to come twice; and it is a convenience and indulgence therefore, that the prayers are read all together at once; and whoever he be, who will not attend ſo much as once, muſt really have as little taſte for beauty of compoſition, as he has ſenſe of *the beauty of holineſs*.

At the concluſion of all, as well as at the beginning, it is cuſtomary for every one by himſelf, to offer up a ſhort prayer unto God. And then is the proper time to pay our civilities and reſpects one to another; and not while we are engaged, or ought to be engaged, in our addreſſes to God, to be exchanging ſalutations with men.

Such is the worſhip in the Church of England; ſuch the grounds and reaſons, and ſuch the form and manner of it. Some things perhaps might be changed for the better, ſome repetitions avoided, ſome phraſes and expreſſions amended. But in all caſes it is much eaſier to cenſure and find fault, than to correct and improve; and thoſe who have attempted hitherto to reform our liturgy, have failed miſerably in their attempts, changing many things for the worſe, very few for the better, beſides inſtilling their pernicious doctrins, and thereby turning their very prayers into ſin. It may be queſtioned whether even the modernizing of ſome old phraſes and expreſſions would not have a bad effect, rather than a good one. In the opinion of ſome of the beſt judges and writers in our language, the Bible and Common Prayer Book have been the principal means of perpetuating and aſcertaining the Engliſh tongue. Dean Swift in his Letter to the Lord Treaſurer Oxford thus delivers his ſentiments upon the ſubject. "It is your "Lordſhip's obſervation, that if it were not for the Bible and Com-"mon Prayer Book in our vulgar tongue, we ſhould hardly be able "to underſtand any thing, that was written among us an hundred "years ago; which is certainly true: for thoſe books being perpe-"tually read in churches, have proved a kind of ſtandard for lan-"guage, eſpecially to the common people. And I doubt whether "the alterations ſince introduced have added much to the beauty or "ſtrength of the Engliſh tongue, though they have taken off a great

" from that *ſimplicity*, which is one of the greateſt perfections in any " language. You, my Lord, who are ſo converſant in the ſacred " writings, and ſo great a judge of them in their originals, will agree, " that no tranſlation our country ever yet produced hath come up to " that of the Old and New Teſtament: and by the many beautiful paſ- " ſages, which I have often had the honor to hear your Lordſhip cite " from thence, I am perſuaded, that the tranſlators of the bible were " maſters of an Engliſh ſtile much fitter for that work, than any we " ſee in our preſent writings; which I take to be owing to the *ſim-* " *plicity* that runs through the whole. Then as to the greateſt part " of our liturgy, compiled long before the tranſlation of the bible " now in uſe, and little altered ſince, there ſeem to be in it as great " ſtrains of true ſublime eloquence, as are any where to be found in " our language; which every man of good taſte will obſerve in the " *communion ſervice*, that of *burial*, and other parts."

In the main it is a moſt excellent ſervice, but we muſt not look for perfection in any human compoſition. It may ſatisfy us, that it is confeſſedly the beſt of the kind in the whole Chriſtian world. Thoſe who diſliked our liturgy, I truſt, after this ſurvey of it, will not like it leſs; and thoſe who valued it, I hope, will value it more. Let but our hearts accompany our words, and we need not doubt of its proving in every reſpect (Rom. XII. 1.) " a reaſonable ſervice, holy and ac- " ceptable unto God."

DISSERTATION XIV.

On our SAVIOUR's Miracles.

IN ſeveral places of the goſpels our bleſſed Saviour appeals to his miracles for a proof of his divine miſſion. He was in the temple, (John X. 24, 25.) when " the Jews came round about him, and ſaid " unto

" unto him, How long doſt thou make us to doubt? If thou be " the Chriſt, tell us plainly. Jeſus anſwered them, I told you, and " ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they " bear witneſs of me. Though ye believe not me," ſaith he again (ver. 38.) " believe the works, that ye may know and believe that " the Father is in me, and I in him." This teſtimony he prefers to that of John the Baptiſt, (John V. 36.) " I have greater witneſs than " that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to " finiſh, the ſame works that I do, bear witneſs of me, that the Fa- " ther hath ſent me." The better to judge of the nature of which proof it may be proper to obſerve, that it was highly expedient and neceſſary for him to work miracles, and his miracles have (as it was fitting they ſhould have) ſuch diſtinguiſhing marks and properties, as manifeſtly give them the preheminence and advantage over all others, which were ever wrought or pretended to be wrought in the world.

I. I obſerve it was highly expedient and neceſſary for our bleſſed Saviour to work miracles: For how could it be proved that he was a teacher ſent from God, unleſs he brought his credentials along with him? How can we know of the doctrin, whether it is of God or whether a man ſpeaketh of himſelf, if there be not ſome marks to diſtinguiſh the one from the other, and what marks ſo proper and deciſive as miracles? No one cometh upon an extraordinary commiſſion from God without the works of God. Upon this ground Moſes (Exod. IV.) and Gideon (Judg. VI.) required a ſign, and God was pleaſed to ſatisfy them both. A ſyſtem of doctrins how good and excellent ſoever may ſeem only the effect of human art and ſtudy, unleſs miracles, the great ſeals of heaven, are ſet to it and authorize it for divine. Some indeed have denied the poſſibility of miracles, and by metaphyſical ſuttleties endevor to evade their force, and to deſtroy their credibility. But why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible or impoſſible for God to work miracles upon ſpecial occaſions? The ſame power that firſt eſtabliſhed the courſe of nature can as eaſily ſuſpend and alter it. Plain hiſtory and certain matters of fact are too ſtrong for all the ſuttlety and ſophiſtry of the moſt artful metaphyſicians, as the philoſophers argu-

ments againſt motion were ſufficiently refuted by the man's getting up and walking.

Farther, it was expedient for our bleſſed Saviour to work miracles not only as he was a lawgiver and a prophet, but more eſpecially as he was a lawgiver and a prophet to ſucceed in the place of Moſes. The ſame power at leaſt is neceſſary for the repealing a law, as was employed in the firſt enacting it. The law of Moſes was confirmed by miracles, and it could not therefore without miracles as great or greater be aboliſhed.

Again, ſince the kingdom of Satan and the worſhip of the falſe gods was ſupported by counterfeit wonders, they could not but by real ones be overthrown. Since miracles were alleged in favor of pretended revelations, it was fit they ſhould not be wanting in the ſupport of a true one.

Moreover, it was expedient and neceſſary for our bleſſed Saviour to work miracles, becauſe it was foretold and expected of the Meſſiah that he ſhould work miracles. Here and there interſperſed in the prophets we find ſeveral prophecies of the miracles of the Meſſiah: and accordingly the whole nation of the Jews were in expectation that the Chriſt at his coming would work many miracles. The ſcribes and phariſees often demanded of our Saviour "a ſign from heaven:" and the people upon the ſight of his miracles cried out (John VII. 31.) "When "the Chriſt cometh will he do more miracles than theſe which this "man hath done?" Nay ſo generally was it expected of the Meſſiah to work miracles, that all the pretenders to that character, pretended too to ſhow "ſigns and wonders." Would our Saviour therefore be thought the Meſſiah, it was neceſſary for him to do the works of the Meſſiah. There was no laying claim to the former without accompliſhing the latter.

As miracles were neceſſary for the proving of Jeſus to be the Meſſiah, ſo they were no leſs neceſſary for the propagation and ſupport of the Chriſtian religion. The Chriſtian religion was not poſſeſſed of any of thoſe advantages, which help forward a new doctrin and promote its party and intereſt in the world. It had not the baits and allurements of ſenſe to recommend it to the taſte and liking of mankind:

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It had not the men of power and authority, of parts and addreſs to engage on its ſide: nay ſo far was it from being countenanced by the great or the wiſe of this world, that it was derided by theſe and perſecuted by thoſe over the face of the whole earth. What then could buoy up the Chriſtian religion againſt the ſtream and torrent of a wicked world? What could make it ſurmount and baffle all oppoſition, and in ſpite of the powers of darkneſs go on conquering to conquer? What but (1 Cor. II. 4.) "the demonſtration of the ſpirit and of power?" The Chriſtian religion could not ſucceed and proſper by natural means, and it was neceſſary therefore to have recourſe to ſupernatural.

Upon theſe accounts it was requiſite for our bleſſed Saviour to work miracles, and had he not exerted a power of that kind, how could we have been ſo well ſatisfied that he was a teacher ſent from God; how could the Chriſtian religion have prevailed over the lying wonders of the Heathens and the true ones of the Jews; how could we have evinced Jeſus to be the Meſſiah, when it was one part of the Meſſiah to work miracles; or how could the goſpel have been propagated, have ſpread ſo far and wide, and influenced ſuch numbers? With miracles theſe things are eaſy, but without them altogether impoſſible: and certainly this was an occaſion worthy of God to interpoſe, this was a time for him to ſtretch out his hand and make bare his holy arm. Indeed it would ill become the majeſty of the great Lord of heaven and earth to reverſe his laws, and alter the courſe of nature upon every occaſion. Such great and extraordinary means are uſed only to ſerve ſome great and extraordinary end; and what end can be propoſed more great or more noble than the confirming a revelation from heaven; a revelation ſo agreeable to the attributes of God, and ſo perfective of the nature and conducive to the happineſs of men? All nature cannot furniſh out a cauſe more worthy of miracles: there is nothing deſerving of them, if the honor of God and the redemption and ſalvation of mankind be not.

But here ſome difficulties will occur. For if it was ſo very expedient and neceſſary as we contend, for our bleſſed Saviour to work miracles, What was the reaſon that he could do no mighty works among his

his own countrymen and thoſe who did not believe in him? Why at ſome times did he refuſe to do them, when called upon for proofs of his divine miſſion? And why at other times did he injoin ſuch ſecrecy, as if he was unwilling to have them known? Each of theſe objections, reecchoed by Rouſſeau, and other modern infidels, deſerves ſome conſideration, that we may the better explain and juſtify our Saviour's conduct.

The firſt objection is founded upon ſome expreſſions in the evangeliſts miſerably perverted and abuſed. It is ſaid by St. Matthew (XIII. 58.) that when our Saviour was among his own countrymen, "He "did not many mighty works there becauſe of their unbelief:" and St. Mark in the parallel place (VI. 5.) informs us that "he could there "do no mighty work." Now from hence the objector would infer, that Chriſt did his miracles only where people were eaſy and credulous; but where he was thoroughly known, where men had no faith in him and conſequently were ſuſpicious and upon their guard, there he *did not*, there he *could not* perform any mighty works. But can it be preſumed, that the bleſſed evangeliſts would intend any thing that carried in it ſuch a ſevere reflection upon their lord and maſter? From many, from very many paſſages in the ſame writers we learn, that Chriſt did his miracles before unbelievers of all ſorts as well as believers: nay even among the infidels of his own country, he gave ſome inſtances of a ſupernatural power, the contrary whereto the objection ſuppoſes. "He did not "many mighty works there," ſays St. Matthew; but that ſtill implies that he did *ſome:* and St. Mark expreſly aſſerts, that "he could there "do no mighty work, ſave that he laid his hands upon a few ſick "folk, and healed them." His countrymen were witneſſes to ſome of his miracles (Matt. ver. 54.) "inſomuch that they were aſtoniſhed "and ſaid, Whence hath this man this wiſdom and theſe mighty "works?" We ſee then that our Saviour did ſome miracles in his own country, for what reaſon may we preſume that he *did not*, that he *could not* do more? Becauſe his countrymen knowing his parentage and education were therefore offended in him; and the miracles he had already wrought having no good effect upon them, he would not vouchſafe them any

any more, but juſtly left them to their infidelity and hardneſs of heart. They were moſt unreaſonably prejudiced againſt him; and therefore he *could not*, or he *would not* do many mighty works among them, for *could* and *would* are in all languages frequently put the one for the other. Nay it may ſtrictly be ſaid, that he *could not* do many mighty works there; for the divine wiſdom *can never* do what is not fit and proper to be done; and ſurely it is not proper to laviſh and throw away miracles upon the obſtinate and undeſerving. Our Saviour's miracles were acts of mercy and goodneſs; and few of his countrymen being fit objects of mercy, he therefore could do but few miracles among them.

Again it is objected, and at firſt ſight it may ſeem ſomewhat ſtrange, that our Saviour did not ſatisfy the ſcribes and phariſees, when they demanded of him "a ſign from heaven." It was expected of the Meſſiah to ſhow ſigns and wonders; and if Jeſus was the Meſſiah, why did he refuſe to do the works of the Meſſiah? When could he diſplay his power more ſeaſonably than when it was required of him? How could he expect that the people ſhould be convinced, when he would do nothing for their conviction? By *a ſign from heaven* the phariſees perhaps meant only ſome miracle, ſome ſign to ſhow that he was ſent from heaven; for what in ſome places is called *a ſign from heaven*, in others is called ſimply *a ſign*. Our Saviour upon this very requeſt of the phariſees obſerves (Matt. XVI. 4.) "A wicked and adulterous generation ſeeketh "after a ſign, and no ſign ſhall be given unto it but the ſign of the "prophet Jonas:" And St. Matthew elſewhere relates (XII. 38.) "Then certain of the ſcribes and of the phariſees anſwered ſaying, "Maſter, we would ſee a ſign from thee." If this be the meaning of *a ſign from heaven*, then there are *ſigns* enow to prove Jeſus Chriſt to be a teacher ſent from heaven. But if by *a ſign from heaven* be particularly underſtood ſome miracle, ſome declaration *from heaven*, then there are not wanting even ſigns of this kind to confirm the truth of the Chriſtian religion. For what was the voice from heaven, at our Saviour's baptiſm, ſaying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am "well pleaſed," but *a ſign from heaven?* What was his transfiguration but a *ſign from heaven?* What was the miraculous eclipſe of the

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ſun at his crucifixion, but *a ſign from heaven?* If the phariſees had a farther meaning, and alluding to the prophecy of Daniel (VII. 13.) expected to ſee "the Son of man coming with the clouds of heaven," the time for this manifeſtation was not yet come: and what right had the phariſees to demand one miracle more than another? What preſumption was it in them to chooſe what they would have done, and not leave it to Chriſt to manifeſt his power in what manner he ſhould think proper? But whether by *a ſign from heaven* be meant in general any miracle, or only ſome particular miracle in the heavens, our bleſſed Saviour refuſed to ſhow either the one or the other: and why did he refuſe? becauſe they ſought it of him "tempting him. "And the phariſees came forth," ſays St. Mark, (VIII. 11.) "and be-"gan to queſtion with him, ſeeking of him a ſign from heaven, tempt-"ing him: And others tempting him," ſays St. Luke, (XI. 16.) "ſought of him a ſign from heaven." They aſked it not out of any good deſign, but out of vain curioſity, juſt as Herod (Luke XXIII. 8.) "hoped to have ſeen ſome miracle done by him." They aſked it, not that they might be convinced, but that they might inſnare him, and have ſomething whereof to accuſe him. They were determined not to be convinced: and why ſhould our bleſſed Saviour gratify the pride and impertinence of ſuch captious and unreaſonable men? why ſhould he give "that which was holy unto the dogs, and caſt his "pearls before ſwine, who would trample them under their feet, and "turn again and rent him?" But if nothing leſs than a ſign would ſerve their turn, they ſhould in a ſhort time have a ſign given them, "the "ſign of the prophet Jonas; (Matt. XII. 40.) for as Jonas was three "days and three nights in the whale's belly, ſo ſhall the Son of man "be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." If any thing would convince them of his divine miſſion, they could not fail of being convinced by his riſing from the dead; and if that had not the deſired effect upon them, all other endevors, all other applications would be vain and ineffectual.

Yet there remains a third difficulty, and perhaps the greateſt and moſt conſiderable of all, Why did our bleſſed Saviour ſo frequently command

command his diſciples not to make his miracles public? Why upon curing ſeveral perſons did he ſtrictly oblige them to ſecrecy and ſilence? His miracles were deſigned to bear witneſs that he was the Meſſiah; and one would think the more they were publiſhed, the more they would redound to his honor, and eſtabliſh his authority in the minds of the people. So much caution and reſerve appear the more extraordinary, "for (John VII. 4.) there is no man that doth "any thing in ſecret, and he himſelf ſeeketh to be known openly." Moſt of our Saviour's miracles were acts of public notoriety; it was only in ſome inſtances that he required ſecrecy, and eſpecially in the firſt years of his miniſtry, that he might not ſuffer under the imputation of pride and vain-glory, that the people might not preſs too much upon him and incommode him, as they often did (Mark III. 20.) "ſo that he could not ſo much as eat bread." He was unwilling to be ſuſpected of any ambitious views, or of courting popular applauſe and admiration; for after the great miracle of feeding five thouſand men with five barley loaves and two ſmall fiſhes, (John VI. 15.) "when he perceived that they would come and take "him by force to make him a king, he departed into a mountain "himſelf alone," that he might not raiſe a tumult among the people, or provoke the jealouſy of government. But the principal reaſon I conceive to have been this. Our Saviour had a certain time appointed for the diſcharge of his miniſtry, and he was unwilling to be taken away in the midſt of it, as without doubt he would have been, had he not uſed all proper care and circumſpection. Thoſe perverſe wretches the ſcribes and phariſees, upon his doing any miracle, were preſently offended and laid ſnares for his life. They were continually upon the watch for him: and this neceſſitated him to be ſo cautious and wary in his behaviour. As it was, they gave him a great deal of diſturbance in the execution of his office; and they would have given him more had he been more free and open. He uſed no more reſerve than was neceſſary for his preſervation. He injoined ſecrecy to his followers, only that they who ſought occaſion, might have no occaſion againſt him, that they might not blaſpheme the divine power by which

he wrought his miracles, that they might not cut him off before his hour was come, and before he had finiſhed the works which were given him by his Father. An inſtance or two out of the evangeliſts will greatly illuſtrate and enforce my meaning. We have an account in St. Matthew (XII.) and St. Mark (III.) of Chriſt's healing the man with the withered hand on the ſabbath-day. Our Saviour had no ſooner done this miracle, but the phariſees took counſel with the Herodians againſt him, how they might deſtroy him. Upon this our Saviour was forced for his own ſafety to retire to the ſea, and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all, and "charged them that they ſhould not make him known." His caution in his latter miracles, we ſee, was wholly owing to the danger he had incurred by the former, his reſtoring the withered hand on the ſabbath-day. Unclean ſpirits too when they ſaw him fell down before him, and cried ſaying, "Thou art the ſon of God; and he ſtraitly "charged them that they ſhould not make him known." The devils proclaimed him the Son of God, we may be certain not with intention to do him honor, not with deſign to promote the goſpel, but on purpoſe to ſtir up the phariſees againſt him, that they might diſturb him in his miniſtry, and lay violent hands on him before he had completed it. This was their wicked policy, and for this he awed them into ſilence. Again, We read in St. John (XI.) that when our Saviour had raiſed Lazarus from the dead, "the chief prieſts and phariſees gathered a "council, and ſaid What do we for this man doeth many miracles? "Then from that day forth they took counſel together for to put him to "death." And what was the conſequence of this? Why, "Jeſus "therefore walked no more openly among the Jews." By theſe inſtances we may judge of the reſt; as when our Saviour ordered the three diſciples, who were preſent at his transfiguration, (Mark IX. 9.) to "tell no man what things they had ſeen till the Son of man "were riſen from the dead." The report of his transfiguration, while he was living, would in all probability have drawn on him the violence and fury of his enemies before his time was come; but when he was dead, that fear would be removed, and the great and public miracle

miracle of his reſurrection would give credit to the more private one of his transfiguration. None who admitted the former could well deny the latter. Theſe exceptions are therefore ſo far from obſcuring that they rather illuſtrate the truth and certainty of the Chriſtian religion.

II. I obſerve of the miracles of our Saviour, that they are not only liable to no material objection, but that they have (as it was fitting they ſhould have) ſuch diſtinguiſhing marks and properties as manifeſtly give them the preheminence and advantage over all others which were ever wrought or pretended to be wrought in the world. There is the greateſt power on the ſide of Chriſtianity, and conſequently one would expect the greateſt wonders. And in reality the Sovran of the world can never ſuffer himſelf to be outdone by any of his creatures. His goodneſs and his honor are both concerned not to let an impoſtor come abroad with as ample power and as full credentials as a teacher of divine truths. The Chriſtian religion was deſigned to take place of all other religions, and therefore it was fit it ſhould be diſtinguiſhed above all others. The Chriſtian religion is the laſt and moſt perfect revelation that God will ever make of his will to mankind, and therefore it was reaſonable it ſhould have the ſtrongeſt and cleareſt atteſtation. The demonſtration of a power ſuperior to all other powers, of miracles greater than all other miracles is the readieſt way to convince men that God is with us of a truth. This is an argument every where to be underſtood, and no where to be denied. It requires no depth of learning, no deductions of reaſon to make us ſee and apprehend its force, but is alike obvious and eaſy to the moſt ignorant and the moſt knowing, to thoſe of the meaneſt capacities, and thoſe of the fineſt parts and improvements. For theſe reaſons it was fitting the miracles of our Saviour ſhould have the advantage over all other miracles, and now that they really have that advantage may appear by the following conſiderations.

1. The miracles of Jeſus are *better atteſted* than any others. And ſince miracles were ſoon to ceaſe in the Chriſtian Church, it was re-

quiſite that a moſt faithful and unqueſtionable account ſhould be tranſmitted to us of the miracles wrought in the firſt ages, that ſo they who have not ſeen might yet believe. Now the miracles of Jeſus are contained in the writings of the apoſtles and evangeliſts, men who were neither able had they been willing, nor willing had they been able, to put a cheat upon the world; who were for the moſt part eye-witneſſes of the facts, and therefore could not be deceived themſelves, who had no intereſt to ſerve, and therefore would not deceive others; who agreed to a nicety in their relations, and ſealed the truth of what they atteſted with their blood. And theſe writings of theirs were publiſhed while the facts were ſtill freſh in people's memory, and while it lay in every man's power to inform himſelf of all the particulars, and to make a diſcovery of the fraud if there had been any fraud to diſcover.

But ſo far were our Saviour's miracles from ever being apprehended as cheats and impoſtures, that the Jews, both the doctors and the people, were fully ſatisfied of the truth of them. "This man "doeth many miracles," (John XI. 47.) was the judgment of the chief prieſts and phariſees in council; and "Jeſus of Nazareth a "man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and "ſigns, which God did by him in the midſt of you, as ye your-"ſelves alſo know," (Acts II. 22.) was the appeal of St. Peter to a mixt multitude of the men of Iſrael. That great and unpardonable ſin of the Jews, the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, was yet allowing that our Saviour wrought miracles, though it was denying the power by which they were wrought. The very bittereſt and moſt ſuttle enemies Chriſtianity ever had, Julian, and Celſus, and Porphyry, could not withſtand the glaring evidence that there is for our Saviour's miracles. They admit (becauſe they cannot but admit) the facts; and only diſpute about the manner of doing them.

Beſides theſe external teſtimonies we have an internal evidence of their truth in the Chriſtian religion as at preſent ſpread and profeſſed in the world. For this was effected either with miracles or without miracles. If without miracles then that a religion ſo contrary

trary to fleſh and blood, ſo weak and defenſeleſs, ſo perſecuted and oppreſſed, ſhould prevail over the religions of the world without miracles, is itſelf a miracle and the greateſt of miracles.

And now what miracles are ſo well atteſted as theſe of our bleſſed Saviour? The Heathen miracles are ſo manifeſtly fabulous that no account is to be made of them: nor are the miracles in the Church of Rome one jot ſuperior to them. They are framed only to gull the credulous and eaſy, and it is not to be expected that we ſhould believe them, when the knowing men of that communion do not believe them themſelves. The only miracles which can any way ſtand in competition with theſe of Chriſt are thoſe of Moſes. But though the evidence for them be ſtrong and cogent, yet it is not equal to that for the truth of the goſpel-hiſtory. The miracles of Moſes reſt chiefly, if not ſolely upon the authority of Moſes and the traditions of the Jewiſh nation, and receive little or no collateral helps and advantages from foreign teſtimonies. What Heathen, what Egyptian writers are there in or near the time of Moſes, who make mention of his miracles? What profeſſed enemies and perſecutors of the Jewiſh religion have been forced to acknowlege the ſigns and wonders wrought in its confirmation? What is there ſo ſtrange and ſurpriſing in the ſucceſs of that religion as neceſſarily to make us think, that it was firſt planted by miracles? In ſhort, the miracles of Moſes rely upon the credit of a ſingle nation; the miracles of Chriſt are confirmed, as it were, by the verdict and ſuffrage of a great part of the world: For thoſe we have only the relation of paſt authors; for theſe we have alſo a kind of preſent and ſenſible demonſtration.

2. The miracles of Jeſus were more *numerous* and more *public* than any others. Had he wrought only one or two miracles, they might poſſibly have been aſcribed to chance, to a ſtrange and lucky hit of cauſes and effects: or had he done them privately and before his own diſciples only, they might have been ſuſpected by the reſt of the world of fraud and impoſture. But how many miracles, how many kinds of miracles were wrought by our bleſſed Saviour? Miracles in the heavens, miracles at ſea, and miracles by land, on inanimate and animate

animate creatures, on the dead and the living; and thoſe not once only but often, at different times in different places and with different circumſtances. That great miracle of raiſing the dead in particular, he did no leſs than *four* ſeveral times; once in the ruler's daughter juſt after ſhe had expired; again in the widow's ſon as he was carried on his bier to be buried; a third time in Lazarus when he had lain in his grave four days; and laſt of all and the greateſt inſtance of all, in himſelf. The goſpel is full of the miracles of our Saviour, and yet St. John informs us, that the things which are written are very few in compariſon with thoſe which are unwritten: (John XX. 30.) "And "many other ſigns truly did Jeſus in the preſence of his diſciples, which "are not written in this book;" And again, (XXI. 25.) "There are alſo "many other things which Jeſus did, the which if they ſhould be "written every one, I ſuppoſe that even the world itſelf could not "contain the books that ſhould be written:" A ſtrong hyperbolè to ſet forth the great number and variety of our Saviour's miracles.

As the miracles of Chriſt were numerous, ſo they were not done *privately* and *in a corner*, but openly and in the face of the ſun. They were done in the moſt frequented places and on the moſt public occaſions, at marriages and at funerals, and on ſolemn feſtivals, when the concourſe of people from all parts was greateſt. They were done before men of different tempers and intereſts, of different religions and nations, friends and enemies, prieſts and people, Jews and Samaritans, Roman ſouldiers and worſhippers at Jeruſalem. If there had been any trick or artifice in our Saviour's miracles, what opportunities were here for detecting it? But they could abide the light, and the more they were manifeſted, the more miraculous ſtill did they appear. The Heathen miracles are not comparable in theſe reſpects to the Chriſtian; and as for the Popiſh, there are enough of them indeed, if they were done in an unqueſtionable manner and before credible witneſſes. The firſt are generally ſpeaking, nothing but the wild and extravagant fancies of poets, and the latter are the waking dreams of viſionaries and enthuſiaſts, and are commonly wrought by night in cloiſters and ſuch kind of privacies, and never openly by day and in view of the world.

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The miracles wrought in confirmation of the law are not nigh ſo many as thoſe wrought in behalf of the goſpel; and yet all Moſes his miracles are recorded, but all Chriſt's are not; and Moſes his miracles were done chiefly too in the deſert and before thoſe of his own kindred and nation only. The law was given to the children of Iſrael alone, and therefore it was enough for them alone to be ſpectators of the miracles: but the goſpel-miracles were wrought before men of all nations, for all nations were to receive and embrace the goſpel.

3. The miracles of Jeſus were generally *uſeful* and *beneficial* to mankind, and carry in them the characters of the greateſt goodneſs as well as of the greateſt power. The miracles of Jeſus are not like the wonders of the Heathen magicians, which were either hurtful or trifling at the beſt, and indeed it is not to be ſuppoſed that evil ſpirits for evil men would diſplay their power in acts of mercy and goodneſs. The miracles of Jeſus are not like the frivolous miracles of Mohammed, his pouring water from between his fingers, his cauſing the ſtones to ſalute him, his cleaving the moon into two, and the like aſcribed to him by ſome of his followers: but it muſt be ſaid Mohammed himſelf dealeth more honeſtly, and very frankly declares that he was ſent not to convert the world by miracles, but to ſubdue them to God by the power of the ſword. The miracles of Jeſus are not like the fooliſh and abſurd miracles recorded in the lying legends of the Church of Rome, even as purged and refined by the late collectors and compilers of them. A romance itſelf is a ſerious thing in compariſon of a popiſh legend; and many a cannonized ſaint in the Church of Rome has done more extravagant and freakiſh things than any Knight errant of them all? Nay the ſpirit of the goſpel is unlike the ſpirit of Elias, the ſpirit of the law. The goſpel was not delivered in that terrible manner as was the law with thunderings and lightnings. The Son of man never called for fire from heaven upon his enemies. (Luke IX. 56.) "He came "not to deſtroy mens lives but to ſave them."

There are but two of our Saviour's miracles which carry in them any marks of ſeverity, his cauſing the barren fig-tree to wither and die away, and his ſuffering the devils to enter into the herd of ſwine, whereby the whole

whole herd periſhed in the waters. His cauſing the barren fig-tree to wither and die away (Matt. XXI. Mark XI.) was no damage or inconvenience to any one, and conveyed an inſtructive moral to all Chriſtians, that we might from thence learn what we muſt expect, if we are barren and unfruitful in the knowlege of our Lord Jeſus. For as he elſewhere ſpeaketh, (Matt. VII. 19.) " Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn " down and caſt into the fire." This no doubt was the general deſign of this emblem, but it was more particularly intended for the Jews. It was uſual among the people of the eaſt to deſign things by actions; and there are frequent inſtances of this nature in the prophets of the Old Teſtament. In like manner our Saviour by a familiar type giveth the Jews to underſtand what they muſt expect for making only a formal profeſſion of religion, but not bringing forth fruits worthy of it. (Matt. XXI. 43.) " The kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you, " and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." This figure of the fig-tree our Saviour maketh uſe of more than once to the ſame purpoſe, as may be ſeen in the parable of the barren fig-tree in St. Luke's goſpel (Chap. XIII.) Here it is by way of type, there by way of parable; here the curſe is executed upon it, there he denounceth it (ver. 7.) " Cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

With regard to the deſtruction of the ſwine, (Matt. VIII. Mark V.) it ſhould be conſidered, that our Saviour did not properly ſpeaking command or do this, but only ſuffered it to be done: and it is no more an impeachment of his goodneſs that he ſuffered this to be done, than it is of the providence of God that he permits any evil to be committed in the world. Our Saviour might ſuffer this perhaps to ſhow the great power and malice of evil ſpirits if not reſtrained by God; perhaps, if the Jews were the owners of the ſwine, to puniſh them for violating the laws and uſages of their country, which forbad the eating of ſwine and even the keeping of them; or perhaps, if the Gentiles were the owners of the ſwine, to convince them (as Grotius conceives) of the ſacredneſs and divinity of the Jewiſh laws, which they ridiculed as upon many accounts, ſo particularly for the prohibition of eating ſwine's-fleſh; and farther it may be to puniſh them for laying

laying a ſnare in the way of the Jews. Whoever they were who ſuſtained this loſs, they ſeem to have deſerved it for their covetous inhuman temper; for they were not ſo much pleaſed with the good that was done to the men, as they were offended with the loſs of the ſwine; and inſtead of being awakened by ſo great a miracle to confeſs their ſins and revere the power of Chriſt, they deſire him immediately to depart out of their coaſts. They could not but be ſenſible that he muſt be a divine perſon who had wrought this miracle among them, yet becauſe they had ſuſtained ſome loſs by it, they never apply to him for his mercy, but ſend him away, and by that means ſhow themſelves ſtill more worthy of the puniſhment that he had brought upon them.

There were good reaſons therefore for his ſeverity in theſe caſes, but in all other inſtances he was all goodneſs. He was the greateſt phyſician to bodies as well as ſouls: his conſtant employment was feeding the hungry, healing the ſick, and raiſing the dead. The firſt of his miracles was at a wedding converting water into wine, thereby ſhowing that he was no enemy to innocent mirth and good converſation: and one of the laſt was healing the ear of the high prieſt's ſervant whom St. Peter had wounded. The goſpel was the covenant of mercy, and it could not be better ratified and confirmed than by acts of mercy.

4. Our Saviour did thoſe very miracles which it was foretold the Meſſiah ſhould do: and no doubt from the ſame Spirit proceeded both the prophecy and the completion. It was not only foretold that the Meſſiah ſhould work miracles in general, but it was alſo ſignified that he ſhould work ſuch and ſuch miracles in particular. "Your God "will come and ſave you," ſaith the prophet Iſaiah; (XXXV. 4, &c.) "then the eyes of the blind ſhall be opened, and the ears of the deaf "ſhall be unſtopped; then ſhall the lame man leap as an hart, and "the tongue of the dumb ſing." And accordingly it is related of our Saviour in the goſpel; (Mark VII. 37. Matt. XI. 5.) "He maketh "both the deaf to hear and the dumb to ſpeak; the blind receive their "ſight, and the lame walk;" and beſides, "the lepers are cleanſed and "the dead are raiſed up." So that our Saviour has performed what was foretold, and more than was foretold: and if the firſt alone is a ſufficient

evidence of his being the Meſſiah, much more is the firſt and laſt taken together. The miracles of Chriſt confirm his religion not ſimply as miracles, but as miracles particularly foretold by the Spirit of God: And this is an advantage peculiar to the Chriſtian miracles, for there are none beſides theſe particularly foretold, the miracles of Antichriſt only excepted: And I ſuppoſe none will be forward to lay claim to them, though it be not difficult to diſcern to whom they of right belong. Mohammed in his Koran diſclaims miracles, but the Church of Rome pretends to them: and this is one great reaſon why the Pope is antichriſt rather than the Turk.

5. and laſtly, Our Saviour not only wrought miracles himſelf, but impowered his Apoſtles to do the like; and indeed there was the very ſame neceſſity both for the one and the other. Nay he not only gave his apoſtles power from on high, but enabled them alſo to confer the ſame on others; and I am ſure there is nothing parallel nothing comparable to this to be found in all the hiſtories and in all the religions under the ſun.

What exceeding great reaſon therefore have we to bleſs and praiſe Almighty God for affording ſuch ample teſtimony to the truth of our religion? And how unreaſonable and perverſe a thing is infidelity, that not ſatisfied with this evidence, demands ſtill more? He who reſiſts this would reſiſt every thing beſides this; and "neither would he be "perſuaded though one ſhould riſe from the dead." We might have had ſome excuſe for our blindneſs, if our Saviour had not done ſuch mighty works; but now there can be no manner of pretence for infidelity or irreligon. "If I had not done among them," ſays our Saviour, (John XV. 24, 22.) "the works which none other man did, "they had not had ſin; but now they have no cloke for their ſin." And how will it enhance our guilt and aggravate our condemnation, if profeſſing a religion thus owned and approved and authorized by God we be not careful to frame our lives according to it. (Heb. II. 2, &c.) "For if the word ſpoken by angels," if the law of Moſes, "was "ſtedfaſt and every tranſgreſſion and diſobedience received a juſt recom-"penſe of reward; How ſhall we eſcape if we neglect ſo great ſalva-

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" tion, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was " confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God alſo bearing them " witneſs both with ſigns and wonders and with divers miracles and " gifts of the Holy Ghoſt according to his will?" As St. John ſaith, (1 John V. 10.) " He that believeth not God, hath made him a lier, " becauſe he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son."

DISSERTATION XV.

On the DEMONIACS.

IN reading the goſpels, I make no doubt, it hath happened to many others as well as to myſelf, that they have been ſtruck with the accounts of the *demoniacs* or perſons poſſeſſed with devils, and have wondered within themſelves what kind of beings theſe demons, and what ſort of diſorders theſe poſſeſſions could be. We do not read of ſo many caſes of this kind either before or after this period, neither do we certainly know of any ſuch inſtances at preſent: And why ſhould they abound ſo much more at this time than at any other, and yet the Jews ſpeak not of them as any matter of ſurpriſe or novelty, but as things not unuſual among them? They expreſs much wonder at our Saviour's manner of curing theſe diſorders, but none at the diſorders themſelves, as if they were not unaccuſtomed to them. Theſe queſtions have been much agitated among learned men, who generally are divided into two contrary opinions, the one that theſe poſſeſſions were real operations of devils, the other that they were nothing more than natural cauſes and effects, and were ſuch diſtempers as are incidental to men, but only with different names. Now the better to judge and determin in which ſcale the truth preponderates, we muſt hold the balance with

an even hand, incline neither to the one ſide nor to the other, but weigh and examin things with deliberation and by degrees.

I. Our firſt inquiry will naturally be What kind of beings theſe *demons* were, and conſequently whether the word is rightly tranſlated *devils*. In one of the diſſertations on the prophecies, explaining that text of the *doctrins of demons* or *devils*, it was ſhown from Plato and the beſt authorities, that demons, according to the theology of the Gentiles, were middle powers between the ſovran Gods and mortal men; that theſe demons were regarded as mediators and agents between the Gods and men; that of theſe demons there were accounted two kinds; that one kind of demons were the ſouls of men deified or canonized after death; that the other kind of demons were ſuch as had never been the ſouls of men, nor ever dwelt in mortal bodies; that theſe latter demons may be paralleled with angels, as the former may with canonized ſaints; and as we Chriſtians believe that there are good and evil angels, ſo did the Gentiles that there were good and evil demons. According to Plutarch (1) 'it was a very ancient opinion, that there are certain wicked and malignant demons, who envy good men, obſtruct their actions, induce troubles and terrors, to hinder them in the purſuit of virtue, leſt after death they ſhould be partakers of greater happineſs than they enjoy.'

In the management of this controverſy, as indeed in moſt other controverſies, the arguments have been puſhed too far on both ſides. On one ſide it has been affirmed that *demons* were nothing more than the ſouls of deceaſed men, and never before the coming of Chriſt ſignified devils or malicious beings, malevolent, hurtful to mankind, delighting in promoting wickedneſs. On the other ſide it has been aſſerted, that the word *demon* doth not ſignify a departed ſoul either in the Claſſics or in the Scriptures. But both parties, as I apprehend, are greatly miſtaken. For there are other demons beſides the ſouls of deceaſed men, noxious evil demons, and ſo called before our Saviour's time;

(1) Plutarch. Dion in initio. των παυ παλαιων. κ. τ. λ. p. 958. Tom. 1. Edit. Paris 1624. See Diſſertation XXIIf. on the Prophecies.

(2) Δαιμονας δε ϗσιας νοει ψυχικας, και ἡρωας τας κεχωρισμενας ψυχας των ανθρωπων· αγαθας μεν τας αγαθας, κακας δε τας φαυλας. Apud Athenag. Legat. pro Chriſtianis. p. 25. Δαιμονας ὑπαρχειν ϗσιας ψυχικας, ειναι δε και ἡρωας τας κεχωρισμενας ψυχας των σωματων. Plut. de Placit. Philoſoph. Lib. 1. Cap. 8. p. 882. Edit. Pariſ. 1624.

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and there are inſtances of the word *demon* ſignifying a departed ſoul both in the Claſſics and in the Scriptures, though perhaps oftener in the former than in the latter. In the diſſertation above mentioned it hath been proved from Heſiod Plato and other authorities, that good men after death become demons, good beings, guardians of mortal men, and authors of good to mankind; and wicked men after death, by parity of reaſon, muſt become other demons, evil beings, tempters of mortal men, and authors of evil to mankind. That there were wicked and malignant demons, obſtructing and envying the virtue and happineſs of men, was, according to Plutarch in the forecited paſſage, a very ancient opinion, των παυυ παλαιων; and conſequently an opinion that prevailed before our Saviour's time. Thales, one of the firſt and beſt of the Greek philoſophers, diſtinguiſheth between demons and heroes, (2) affirming demons to be ſpiritual ſubſtances, and heroes to be the ſouls of men ſeparated from bodies, ſome good and ſome bad. In Homer, Pindar, Ocellus Lucanus and others, philoſophers as well as poets, mention is often made of the hateful and evil demon, and of evil demons, κακοδαιμονες; and the like properties and actions are aſcribed to them, which we commonly attribute to evil angels. The very etymology of the word in ſome meaſure evinces what kind of beings they were accounted. For the moſt probable derivation of it is from a word ſignifying *learned*, *knowing*, *ſkilful* &c; δαιμονες quaſi δαημονες ſays (3) Plato, as if they were beings of ſuperior knowlege. (4) Proclus on Heſiod, and the Scholiaſt on Homer ſay that they are called *demons* as knowing all things, or as being the diſpenſers and diſtributers of good and evil things to men, the word δαιω ſignifying to *divide* as well as to *learn*. Euſebius propoſes another derivation, and ſays (5) that they are fitly called demons from δειμαινειν, filling men with fears and terrors. Here then, without multiplying more quotations, are ſufficient evidences from the Claſſics, that the word *demon* doth ſometimes ſignify a depart-

(3) Plat. in Cratylo. p. 398. Edit. Serrani. Vol. 1.

(4) Proclus in Heſiod. Παρα το δαηναι τα παντα, η μεριζειν τα αγαθα και κακα τοις ανθρωποις. In Iliad. I. 222. Δαιμονας καλει τους θεους, ηγουν δαημονας· εμπειροι γαρ και ιδριες παντων αυτοι εισιν, η ὁτε διαιτηται εισι και διοικηται των ανθρωπων.

(5) Ου παρα το δαημονας ειναι—αλλα παρα το δειμαινειν, ὁπερ εστι φοβεισθαι. και εκφοβειν, δαιμονας τινας προσφυως ονομαζεσθαι. Euſeb. Præp. Evang. Lib. 4. Cap. 5. p. 142. Edit. Vigeri.

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ed ſoul, and that there are other demons beſides departed ſouls, of a ſuperior nature, ſome good and beneficial, others evil and hurtful to mankind, and ſo named before the coming of Chriſt.

But the right notion of demons is to be drawn, not from the Claſſics, but from the Scriptures, which are the ſource and ſtandard of all true demonology as well as of all true theology. Now in the Scriptures it muſt be admitted that the word *demons* moſt uſually ſignifies *devils*: but in the foreſaid diſſertation ſome inſtances are produced to the contrary, to ſhow that the worſhipping of *demons* is the worſhipping of the *dead*, chiefly out of St. Paul, who being the moſt learned of all the apoſtles, and ſpeaking and writing to the Greeks, might expreſs himſelf in accommodation to their notions. I would not repeat what I have ſaid elſewhere; but theſe inſtances excepted, the ſignification of the word is ſo clear in other places, that there can be no doubt of its being rightly tranſlated *devils*. The text of St. James (II. 19.) "The demons be-"lieve and tremble" cannot with propriety be applied to any other beings, nor well admit any other tranſlation than "The devils believe "and tremble." In the goſpels, wherein is the moſt frequent mention of demoniacs, the ſame that are named *demons* are named alſo *ſpirits*, and *unclean ſpirits*, and *evil and wicked ſpirits*. So St. Matthew (XII. 43, 45.) and St. Luke (XI. 24, 26.) "When the unclean "ſpirit is gone out of a man,—he taketh to him ſeven other ſpirits "more wicked than himſelf." There was in the ſynagogue, "a man "with an unclean ſpirit," ſaith St. Mark (I. 23, &c.) "which had a "ſpirit of an unclean demon," ſaith St. Luke; (IV. 33, &c.) "And "when the unclean ſpirit had torn him, he came out of him," ſaith St. Mark;" "And when the demon had thrown him in the midſt, he "came out of him," ſaith St. Luke: and in both the whole is concluded with this juſt reflection of all the ſpectators, "What thing is "this? What a word is this? for with authority and power he com-"mandeth the unclean ſpirits, and they do obey him." When our Saviour called his twelve diſciples, as St. Matthew relates it, (X. 1.) "he "gave them power over unclean ſpirits, and to heal all manner of "ſickneſs and all manner of diſeaſe;" the ſame thing is thus expreſſed by

by St. Luke, (IX. 1.) " he gave them power and authority over all " demons, and to cure diſeaſes." What in St. Mark is *unclean ſpirits*, (III. 11.) " And unclean ſpirits, when they ſaw him, fell down " before him, and cried ſaying, Thou art the Son of God," in St. Luke is *demons*, (IV. 41.) " And demons alſo came out of many, crying out and " ſaying Thou art the Chriſt, the Son of God." What in St. Matthew (XVII. 18.) is a *demon*, in St. Mark (IX. 25.) is a *foul ſpirit*, and *dumb and deaf ſpirit*; and in the parallel place of St. Luke (IX. 42.) is termed both a *demon* and *unclean ſpirit*. St. Luke in the ſame breath as it were ſpeaketh of *evil ſpirits* and *demons* as being the ſame, (VIII. 2.) " And certain women, which had been healed of evil ſpirits and " infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went ſeven " demons." St. Matthew in like manner, (VIII. 16.) " When the " even was come, they brought unto him many that were poſſeſſed " with demons, and he caſt out the ſpirits with his word." In the ſtory of the Syro-phenician woman's daughter (Mark IX. 25, 26.) what is denominated *an unclean ſpirit*, is called immediately afterwards *a demon*; " A certain woman, whoſe youngeſt daughter had " an unclean ſpirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet, " (The woman was a Greek, a Syro-phenician by nation) and ſhe be- " ſought him that he would caſt forth the demon out of her daughter." Other inſtances might be collected, but theſe are ſufficient to ſhow that *demons* and *ſpirits*, and *foul and unclean ſpirits*, and *evil and wicked ſpirits* are ſynonymous terms, and are uſed promiſcuouſly to denote the ſame beings. It farther appears too, that *demons* are beings of the ſame kind, of the ſame nature as *Satan* and *Beelzebub*, *the prince* or *chief of the demons*. For by our Saviour's argumentation, when he was accuſed of caſting out demons by Beelzebub the prince or chief of the demons, (Matt. XII. 22—32. Mark III. 22—30. Luke XI. 14—26.) it is plain to demonſtration, that caſting out *demons* is caſting out *Satan*, that caſting out demons by *Beelzebub* is oppoſed to caſting out demons by *the Spirit of God*, that caſting out demons by *Beelzebub* is the ſame as caſting out demons by *Satan*, that Satan's caſting out *demons* is caſting out *himſelf*, that *Satan* and *Beelzebub* are the ſame, that the

demons,

demons, and *Satan* and *Beelzebub the prince* or *chief of the demons* are beings of the ſame nature, and differ only in order and degree. When the Seventy returned to our Saviour, (Luke X. 17, 18.) " ſaying, " Lord even the demons are ſubject unto us through thy name;" he conſidered the fall of *demons* as the fall of *Satan*, as another fall of angels, " I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven." St. Peter ſpeaketh of the demoniacs under the name and notion of " oppreſſed with " the devil," ὑπο τȣ διαβολȣ, when he told Cornelius the Centurion, (Acts X. 38.) " how God anointed Jeſus of Nazareth with the Holy " Ghoſt and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all " that were oppreſſed of the devil, for God was with him." He mentions this as one of the greateſt exertions of divine goodneſs and power. It is evident then, that theſe *wicked and unclean ſpirits*, theſe *demons and the prince* or *chief of the demons* are not the ſouls of men or women deceaſed, but are really and truly *the devil and his angels:* and conſequently that the word *demons* is juſtly and properly tranſlated *devils*, eſpecially throughout the goſpels.

II. Having ſeen what kind of beings theſe demons are, let us now inquire what ſorts of diſtempers were uſually attributed to their influence and operation. Saul's diſorder is expreſly aſcribed to this cauſe. (1 Sam. XVI. 14.) " The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and " an evil ſpirit from the Lord troubled him." Joſephus too in his relation of this caſe often mentions the demon or demons as agitating and diſturbing him. His caſe appears plainly to have been of the atribilarious or melancholy kind; and according to (6) Rambam, the Jews call every kind of melancholy an evil ſpirit.

Melancholy and madneſs are nearly allied, and this diſorder alſo was ſuppoſed to proceed from poſſeſſion by an evil ſpirit. The Jews ſaid of our Saviour, (John X. 20.) " He hath a devil, and is mad," conſidering the former as the cauſe, and the latter as the effect. Several actions of the demoniacs ſhow evidently that they were alſo madmen; the ſame ſymptoms are diſcoverable in both. Take for example (Mark V. 1, &c. Luke VIII. 26, &c.) " the man who ware no cloaths, neither

(6) See Lightfoot, Hebrew Exercitations on Luke XIII. 11. Vol. 2. p. 442.

" abode

" abode in any houſe, but had his dwelling among the tombs, and no " man could bind him, no not with chains: becauſe that he had been " often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been pluck- " ed aſunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces, neither could " any man tame him; and always night and day he was in the moun- " tains and in the tombs, crying and cutting himſelf with ſtones." Here are all the ſtrongeſt marks of the fierceſt and moſt raging frenzy; but when the devils were departed out of him, we find him " ſitting at " the feet of Jeſus, cloathed and in his right mind," as St. Mark and St. Luke both relate it. The expulſion of the evil ſpirits was likewiſe the cure of his madneſs.

Epilepſy is another diſeaſe which, as well as madneſs, was imputed to the agency of evil ſpirits. We have a moſt remarkable caſe of this kind in the goſpels, (Matt. XVII. 14—21. Mark IX. 17—29. Luke IX. 38—42.) where all the ſymptoms are deſcribed as particularly and as exactly as they could be by a ſkilful phyſician. St Matthew deſcribes him thus, " He " is lunatic and ſore vexed, for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and " oft into the water." He is called *a lunatic*, as his fits might be better or worſe according to the courſe and changes of the moon, which as phyſicians obſerve is not unuſual in this diſtemper. St. Luke thus repreſents him, " Lo, a ſpirit taketh him, and he ſuddenly " crieth out, and it teareth him, that he foameth again, and brui- " ſing him, hardly departeth from him." St. Mark is more copi- ous, " Whereſoever the ſpirit taketh him, he teareth him, and he " foameth, and gnaſheth with his teeth, and pineth away. This " came unto him of a child, and oft-times it hath caſt him into the " fire, and into the waters, to deſtroy him." When he was brought unto our Saviour, " ſtraitway the ſpirit tare him, and he fell on the " ground, and wallowed foaming." A patient truly to be pitied, and hard to be cured: but upon Jeſus ſaying unto the ſpirit, " I charge " thee come out of him, and enter no more into him, the ſpirit cried, " and rent him ſore, and came out of him; and he was as one dead, " inſomuch that many ſaid He is dead; but Jeſus took him by the " hand, and lifted him up, and he aroſe." The malady was occaſi-

oned by the inhabitation of an evil ſpirit, and the ejection of that ſpirit was the remedy. The cauſe ceaſing, the effect ceaſed too.

Other diſorders were aſcribed to demons or evil ſpirits beſides the fore-mentioned of melancholy and madneſs and epilepſy. Job's diſeaſe, which ſeemeth to have been cuticular, of the leprous and ulcerous kind to a very great degree, is ſaid to have been inflicted by Satan through the permiſſion of God. (Job II. 7.) "So went Satan forth "from the preſence of the Lord, and ſmote Job with ſore boils from "the ſole of his foot unto his crown." Satan is alſo repreſented as the cauſe and author of the crooked woman's infirmity in the goſpel. (Luke XIII. 11, &c.) "And behold, there was a woman which had a ſpirit "of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in "no wiſe lift up herſelf. And when Jeſus ſaw her, he called her to "him, and ſaid unto her, Woman, thou art looſed from thine infir-"mity: And he laid his hands on her; and immediately ſhe was "made ſtrait, and glorified God." *A ſpirit of infirmity* may be thought an ambiguous indeterminate expreſſion, but the meaning of it is limited and aſcertained, when this *ſpirit* is explained immediately afterwards to be *Satan* ("whom Satan hath bound, lo, theſe eighteen "years") ὁ Σατανας with the article, the great enemy and adverſary of mankind. There are alſo demoniacs in the goſpel, who yet diſcover not the leaſt tokens or ſigns of madneſs. They were blind and dumb, but the blindneſs and dumbneſs are attributed to the poſſeſſion of evil ſpirits, and the recovery to their ejection. (Matt. IX. 32, 33.) "As "they went out, behold, they brought unto him a dumb man poſ-"ſeſſed with a demon: And when the demon was caſt out, the "dumb ſpake; and the multitudes marveled, ſaying, It was never "ſo ſeen in Iſrael." (Matt. XII. 21.) "Then was brought unto "him one poſſeſſed with a demon, blind and dumb; and he heal-"ed him, inſomuch that the blind and dumb both ſpake and ſaw."

But

(7) δαιμονιζομενοι, non quovis modo inſanientes, ſed impurorum ſpirituum vi majore correptos atque agitatos. Grot. in Matt. IV. 24.

(8) Lightfoot. Hebrew Exercitations on Matt. XVII. 15. Vol. 2. p. 211.

(9) Medica Sacra. in Dr. Stack's tranſlation. Cap. 9. At non Judæis tantum, ſed et aliis etiam gentibus, in uſu fuit inſanos pro dæmoniacis habere. Hinc apud Herodotum (Lib. 6. Cap. 84.) rex Cleomenes dicitur *non ab ullo dæmonio ad inſaniam redactus, ſed conſuetudine cum Scythis ebrioſus fuiſſe, et inde furioſus.* Cumque δαιμονιαν idem ſignificet

But not all ſuch diſorders did the Jews aſcribe to demons or evil ſpirits, but thoſe only which were beſide the common courſe of nature, and attended with extraordinary ſymptoms. Madneſs itſelf is ſometimes ſpoken of by its uſual name, without being aſſigned to any ſupernatural cauſe. Solomon mentions (Prov. XXVI. 18.) "a "mad man who caſteth firebrands arrows and death." Of St. Paul it is ſaid (Acts XXVI. 24.) that "he was beſide himſelf, much learning "had made him mad." Our Saviour's relations ſaid of him alſo (Mark III. 21, 22.) "He is beſide himſelf;" but they did not ſay, as the ſcribes did at the ſame time, "He hath Beelzebub;" the former putting a favorable, the latter a moſt malicious conſtruction upon his actions. So juſt and true is the obſervation of Grotius and of our Lightfoot. Grotius (7) explains the word *demoniacs* to ſignify not common madmen, but ſuch as were ſeiſed and agitated by the forcible violence of unclean ſpirits. Lightfoot (8) remarks, that it was uſual with the Jews to attribute to evil ſpirits ſome of the more grievous diſeaſes, eſpecially thoſe, wherein either the body was convulſed and diſtorted, or the mind was diſturbed and agitated by frenzy.

Neither were the Jews ſingular in this belief; other ancient nations entertained ſimilar opinions. Dr. Hyde hath fully evinced it with regard to the Chaldæans and Perſians in his learned hiſtory of the religion of the ancient Perſians. The Greeks and Romans called inſane perſons δαιμονιοληπτοι, νυμφοληπτοι, *Lymphatici*, *Larvati*, *Cerriti*, *Bacchantes* and the like; as if the demons, or the nymphs, or the Larvæ, or Ceres, or Bacchus were the authors of their calamities, tho' what notions they had framed of theſe different beings we cannot tell, very imperfect ones we may be certain. The epilepſy as well as madneſs was called morbus ſacer *a ſacred diſeaſe*, as if it were cauſed by ſome divine power. As Dr. Mead (9) in treating of the demoniacs obſerves, "this cuſtom of taking madmen for demoniacs "was

nificet ac δαιμονιον εχειν, hoc verbo pro *furere* utitur Xenophon. (Memorabil. Lib. 1.) Quin et Ariſtophanes de eodem morbo gravius urgente vocem κακοδαιμονᾶν uſurpat, et deterrimum inſaniæ gradum non μανιαν, ſed κακοδαιμονιαν eſſe pronunciat. (Vide Plutum, Act. 2. Scen. 3. ver. 38. et Act. 2. Scen. 5. ver. 15.) Hinc etiam, ut notat Aretæus, *ſacer* apud illos dictus eſt hic morbus, *quoniam dæmon aliquis in hominem ingreſſus eſſe putabatur*. (δια της δοξης δαιμονος εις τον ανθρωπον εισοδε. De cauſis morbi diuturn. Lib. 1. Cap. 4.)

" was not ſo peculiar to the Jews, but that it prevailed in other " nations alſo. Hence in Herodotus king Cleomenes is ſaid to be " driven into madneſs, not by any demon, but by a habit of drunk- " enneſs, which he had contracted among the Scythians, whereby " he became frantic. And whereas δαιμονᾶν ſignifies the ſame thing " as δαιμονιον εχειν, Xenophon uſes this word for *furere*, to be raging " mad or furious. Moreover Ariſtophanes, intending to expreſs a " high degree of the ſame diſeaſe, employs the word κακοδαιμονᾶν, and " calls the higheſt degree of madneſs, not μανιαν, but κακοδαιμονιαν. " Hence alſo, as Aretæus obſerves, this diſeaſe was called morbus " ſacer, or the ſacred diſeaſe, *becauſe it was imagined that ſome de-* " *mon had entered into the man.*" The Heathens therefore as well as the Jews attributed theſe diſorders to demons, the Jews by demons underſtanding evil ſpirits or devils, the Heathens ſome beings, they knew not what, ſuperior to mortal men. In ſhort, certain diſeaſes, which the ancients aſcribed to ſupernatural cauſes, many of the moderns affect to conſider as natural effects.

III. The great queſtion therefore is, and the moſt difficult to be reſolved, whether the modern or ancient opinion is more agreeable to truth and reaſon, whether theſe kinds of diſeaſes were any ways owing to evil ſpirits, or may be deduced altogether from natural cauſes. One would not willingly encourage ſuperſtition, δεισιδαιμονιαν as the word is in Greek, the dread of demons, and fearing where no fear is; but at the ſame time one would as carefully avoid the other extreme of ſcepticiſm and infidelity, doubting of every thing, and believing nothing but what may be ſeen, and proved even to demonſtration. It betrays great weakneſs as well as great lazineſs in men to be too remiſs in inveſtigating the cauſes of things, and what they cannot readily comprehend and eaſily explain, without ſeeking farther to refer immediately to ſome ſuperior being as the cauſe and author; but on the other hand it argues as great vanity and preſumption to pretend to know all cauſes, and to reduce all effects to their firſt principles, as if nothing was above their level and comprehenſion. Some cauſes may perhaps lie within the ſphere of our knowlege; but many more, I am afraid,

are

are far above and beyond our utmoſt reach and compaſs. The effects are ſeen and felt and obſerved by all men, but the cauſes lie deeper and more remote, and cannot often be traced up like a river to the ſpring-head.

All cauſes may not improperly be reduced to two kinds, material and ſpiritual. Now the philoſophy of the preſent times inclines, as I conceive, to attribute too much to the former and too little to the latter. But matter is a dull dead lifeleſs thing, is always paſſive and (ſtrictly ſpeaking) never active, cannot of itſelf put itſelf into motion, or lay itſelf at reſt, and much leſs can it be the proper and efficient cauſe of any thing. Men may talk of the powers of matter, but it hath really no power, except what the philoſophers term the *vis inertiæ*, the power of inertneſs, the power of doing nothing of itſelf. There is not a ſingle phænomenon in the material world, there is not a ſingle motion or affection of matter, that can be accounted for any more than attraction and gravity itſelf, without having recourſe to ſome ſpiritual agent. Moſt of the cauſes and effects which we are acquainted with are but ſo many different modifications of matter, but all theſe different modifications are effected not by matter itſelf but by ſpirit. Matter at beſt can be regarded only as a ſecondary, and not as a primary cauſe; the firſt mover muſt be of a higher claſs and order of beings. It appears then that in the material world itſelf the firſt the principal agent is ſpirit; and what then muſt it be in the world of ſpirits?

It is certain, there are many more ſpiritual beings in the world, than men commonly are aware of, or generally conceive. We ſee all the parts of nature full of life in the viſible world around us, and we may with reaſon therefore conclude the caſe to be the ſame in the inviſible world above us. The earth, the ſea, the air, and not only all the greater but all the leſſer portions of them, as far as we can perceive, are abundantly ſtocked with inhabitants; many of them come under our inſpection, by the help of glaſſes we diſcover more: but who can tell what numbers eſcape our obſervation, which no eye no glaſſes can reach? There are many kinds of beings plainly

inferior

inferior to man, but there muſt be many more ſuperior to him. The ſcale of beings cannot ſtop at ſuch an imperfect creature as man, but muſt riſe higher and higher towards perfection, the ſpace and interval above us being infinitely greater than that beneath us. We can hardly enumerate the different ſorts and ſpecies of creatures upon earth; and much leſs can we frame any adequate conception of the different degrees and orders of ſpirits in the heavens, whoſe variety is infinite, and being ſpirits they are not immediate objects of ſenſe, nor viſible to human eyes. Milton delivered the ſentiment of all antiquity as well as his own, when he ſaid

> Millions of ſpiritual creatures walk the earth
> Unſeen, both when we wake, and when we ſleep.

Two of the greateſt and wiſeſt of the ancient philoſophers, Thales and Pythagoras (1), affirm that the world and air are full of demons and ſouls. The ſcripture in like manner repreſents the air as the habitation of demons; and the devil is therefore ſtiled (Eph. II. 2.) " the prince of the power of the air," and his angels are denominated (Eph. VI. 12.) " ſpiritual wickedneſs," or as it is in the margin, " wicked ſpirits in high places."

So many demons and ſpirits, hovering and wandering about in the air, muſt by their natural abilities have the power of doing much hurt to the ſouls and bodies of men, unleſs reſtrained by the good providence of God. He, we may be confident, will not ſuffer one part of his creation to break looſe upon another; but he may upon occaſion make uſe of ſome of his creatures as inſtruments of the puniſhment of others. Pythagoras ſpeaking of demons in the place abovementioned (2) ſays, that " by theſe dreams are ſent to ' men, and the prognoſtics of health and of ſickneſs.' Tertullian likewiſe

(1) Τον κοσμον δαιμονων πληρη. Thales apud Diog. Laert. p. 18. ειναι δε παντα τον αερα ψυχων εμπλεον. Pythag. ibid. p. 587. Edit. Henr. Steph. 1584.

(2) Ὑπο τυτων πεμπεσθαι ανθρωποις τας τε ονειρους, και τα ζηρεια νοσυτε και ὑγιειας. Pyth. ibid.

(3) Corporibus quidem et valetudines infligunt et aliquos caſus acerbos, animæ vero repentinos et extraordinarios per vim exceſſus. Suppetit illis ad utramque ſubſtantiam hominis adeundam ſubtilitas et tenuitas ſua. Multum ſpiritalibus viribus licet ut inviſibiles et inſenſibiles in affectu potius

likewiſe (3) aſſerts, that ‘ they inflict grievous diſeaſes on the body, ‘ and excite ſudden and violent commotions in the ſoul; for by ‘ the ſuttlety and fineneſs of their nature they have acceſs to either ‘ ſubſtance of man. They can do much by their ſpiritual powers, ſo ‘ that being inviſible and imperceptible to ſenſe they appear rather ‘ in effect than in their act.’ Lactantius deſcribes their operations much after the ſame manner (4), that ‘ being ſpirits not to be ſeen ‘ or felt they inſinuate themſelves into the bodies of men, and ſe- ‘ cretly working within vitiate their health, excite diſeaſes, terrify ‘ their minds with dreams,’ and the like. Cyprian aſcribes the like effects to them (5), ‘ they diſturb life, diſquiet ſleep, and creeping ‘ ſecretly into the bodies of men terrify their minds, diſtort their ‘ limbs, deſtroy their health, and provoke diſeaſes.’ More teſtimonies might be cited to this purpoſe; and indeed they who deny all power and influence of angels demons and ſpirits over the bodies and ſouls of men, contradict the general belief of mankind as well as the whole tenor of revelation. If the exiſtence of ſuch beings is admitted, their power cannot be denied, the one is ſo plain a conſequence from the other.

But though poſſibly they may have the power of doing theſe things, yet what reaſon is there to think, or how doth it appear, that they ever exerciſed it? It was, I ſuppoſe, the great difficulty of diſcovering the cauſes and applying the remedies to certain diſeaſes, which induced men to look higher, and to regard them as the productions of evil ſpirits. They were for referring them to ſuch cauſes, becauſe they were incapable of diſcerning other cauſes, and could not any other ways account for ſuch effects. If indeed things can be ſufficiently explained upon natural principles, we ſhould not have recourſe to ſupernatural. If we can by any means unty the knot ourſelves, we ſhould not

tius quam in actu ſuo appareant. Tertul. Apol. cap. 22. p. 21. Edit. Rigaltii. Pariſ. 1675.

(4) Qui quoniam ſunt ſpiritus tenues et incomprehenſibiles, inſinuant ſe corporibus hominum, et occulte in viſceribus operati valetudinem vitiant, morbos citant, ſomniis animos terrent &c. Lactant. Lib. 2. Cap. 14.

(5) Vitam turbant, ſomnos inquietant, irrepentes etiam in corporibus occulte mentes terrent, membra diſtorquent, valetudinem frangunt, morbos laceſſunt. Cypr. de Idol. Vanit. p. 10. Edit. Felli. Oxon.

(6) Medica

not bring in a demon to cut it. But are then the cauſes of melancholy, of madneſs, of epilepſy and the like ſo well known and underſtood, that we can point them out in each particular caſe, and mark the diſtinction between them? We may know the ſymptoms the concomitants and effects, we may in ſome meaſure be able to adminiſter remedies; but who can fully explain the ſpring and ſource of theſe diſtempers, generally incurable by all the ſkill and art of man; what it is that produces this craſis of the blood and humors, or how it is that this craſis of the blood and humors excites ſuch horrid convulſions in the body, ſuch extravagant fancies in the mind? Madneſs in particular ſeemeth almoſt as inexplicable as dreaming. In a former diſſertation I attempted to ſhow the extreme difficulty, if not utter impoſſibility, of accounting for the phænomenon of dreaming, by the principles of mere matter and motion, without recurring to the agency of ſome ſpirit: and may not madneſs be conſidered as waking dreams, and dreams as ſleeping madneſs? Very little indeed it is that we can diſcover of the true cauſe and origin of things. We know that ſuch and ſuch things are, but we know not how they are, or what is their real eſſence and conſtitution. Thoſe events which we call natural are ſuch as fall out according to the common courſe of nature; but we are as little able to account for the common and ordinary, as for the ſingular and extraordinary productions of nature. (Eccleſ. XI. 5.) "As thou knoweſt not what is the way of the ſpi-
"rit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with
"child, even ſo thou knoweſt not the works of God who maketh
"all." Since then our knowlege is ſo very deficient, and we can ſo ſeldom ſay *This* is the cauſe, we cannot always be certain *That* is not the cauſe. We cannot give any clear and rational explication of the malignity and incurableneſs of certain diſeaſes, and how then can we be confident that they are no ways owing to the operation of evil ſpirits? May not the ſame effect proceed from different cauſes; and what is uſually produced in the ordinary courſe of nature, may it not be ſometimes effected by the interpoſition of an extraordinary power? Such an interpoſition indeed we ſhould not admit merely upon ſuppoſition,

ſition, nor becauſe we think it poſſible, conclude it therefore to be probable. We ſhould have ſome better warrant and authority, and what better warrant and authority can we deſire than a divine revelation? Things may be or may not be wrought by evil ſpirits for what we can tell; but ſurely we may with reaſon believe them to be wrought by evil ſpirits, when they appear to be ſo from the things themſelves tranſcending all human powers, and moreover when they are affirmed to be ſo by expreſs teſtimonies of holy writ.

Dr. Mead, who was for attributing as much to material, and as little to ſpiritual cauſes, as a leſs reaſonable man could do, in his Medica Sacra thus freely delivers his ſentiments on this head; (6) "I "am not ignorant that the Jews, by a manner of expreſſion familiar "among them, are wont to aſcribe diſeaſes of this kind to the power "of evil angels as miniſters of God; and that even at this day ſome "very learned men may defend the ſame notion. But for my part, "if I may be allowed to declare my thoughts with freedom, I cannot "think it right to have recourſe to the divine wrath for diſeaſes, "which can be proved to have natural cauſes; unleſs it be expreſly "declared, that they were ſent down directly from heaven. For if "they fall on us in puniſhment of our ſins, the intention of the ſu-"preme lawgiver would be fruſtrated, unleſs a ſure rule was given, "whereby his vengeance might be diſtinguiſhed from common "events; in as much as the innocent may be equal ſharers in ſuch "calamities with the guilty. Moreover it ſeems reaſonable to be-"lieve, that evils inflicted by the omnipotent judge muſt be either "incurable, or curable by himſelf alone; that the connection of "his power with his equity may the more brightly ſhine forth. By "ſuch a criterion are miraculous works diſtinguiſhed from the ope-"rations of nature." And is not this preciſely the caſe of the demoniacs and others in the ſcripture? They are expreſly declared to have been actuated and afflicted by evil ſpirits; their caſes are ſufficiently diſtinguiſhed from common events, and were either incurable or curable only by a divine power.

(6) Medica Sacra, cap. 3. in Dr. Stack's tranſlation.

IV. Let us then take a nearer view of the demoniacs in the goſpels, and ſee whether they do not come within this deſcription. Thoſe who maintain that theſe poſſeſſions were nothing more than natural diſeaſes, have not gained any honor or credit by the company they keep: for as Dr. Hutchinſon, the learned editor of ſome part of Xenophon's works, obſerves in a (7) ſermon upon this ſubject, "Pomponatius, Vaninus, Hobbs, Spinoza, and Bekker eſpe-"cially, have all patroniſed the ſame opinion," all of them profane and atheiſtical writers. A very different man is produced as a favorer likewiſe of this opinion, Mr. Mede, and Dr. Mead glories (as well he might) in his relation to him, one of the moſt learned judicious and able of all our divines, whoſe ſingle authority would weigh more with me than that of many other others, being among the firſt of my capital and favorite authors. His ſixth diſcourſe is cited for this purpoſe: but his notions, as I conceive, have been very much miſunderſtood, or very much miſrepreſented. For though he might allow demoniacs to be the ſame as madmen and lunatics, yet he looked upon this madneſs as cauſed by evil ſpirits; and not only ſo, but moreover believed that perſons might be ſo poſſeſſed and actuated at this time. He ſays (8) indeed, that "theſe demoniacs "were no other than ſuch as we call madmen and lunatics, at leaſt "that we comprehend them under thoſe names, and that therefore" (obſerve what follows) "they both *ſtill* are, and in *all times* and *places* "have been much more frequent than we imagin." Again he ſays, "Such as theſe, I ſay, the Jews believed (*and ſo may we*) to be "troubled with evil ſpirits, as it is ſaid of Saul's melancholy that *an* "*evil ſpirit from the Lord troubled him.*" He ſays afterwards, "If "thoſe were not ſuch as we now a-days conceive of no otherwiſe than "as madmen, ſurely the world muſt be ſuppoſed to be very well rid "of devils over it hath been; *which for my part I believe not.*" And in another part of his works he aſſerts the word *demons*, in the goſpels eſpecially, to ſignify *devils*. "The uſe of the word *demon* in "the worſt ſenſe, or directly for a *devil*, will be almoſt confined to

(7) The uſual interpretation of δαιμονες and δαιμονια in the New Teſtament aſſerted in a Sermon before the univerſity of Oxford, p. 30. 1738.

"the

" the goſpels, where the ſubject ſpoken of being *men vexed with evil* " *ſpirits could admit no other ſenſe nor uſe.*" It is evident then that Mr. Mede was ſo far from falling ſhort in belief, that he carried it farther than the generality of Chriſtian Divines do. But I would not therefore affirm that all madmen are demoniacs, any more than I would, that all demoniacs are madmen. The ſymptoms and effects of melancholy, of madneſs, of epilepſy and the like, whether in the natural way as it is called, or by demoniacal poſſeſſion, may be ſo much alike, ſo much the ſame, that we may not be able clearly to diſtinguiſh and point out which is the proper cauſe: but we may determin with ſome kind of certainty, when the poſſeſſion is ſtrongly marked by ſome circumſtances more than natural, and the truth and reality of it are farther confirmed to us by the moſt creditable authors, whom we have all the reaſon in the world to believe to be divinely inſpired.

Of Saul's diſeaſe we ſhould not have known the real cauſe, if the ſacred hiſtorian had not informed us that it was *an evil ſpirit*, and that in ſuch a manner that it cannot be miſtaken. For when Saul was anointed king (1 Sam. X. 9, 10.) " the Spirit of God came upon " him, and gave him another heart." But when by his ſins he had forfeited God's favor, it is ſaid (1 Sam. XVI. 14.) that " the Spirit " of the Lord departed from him, and an evil ſpirit from the Lord " troubled him." We ſee the one is plainly oppoſed to the other; the one is a name or quality only no more than the other; the one is a fictitious being no more than the other; both are real agents, *the evil ſpirit* as well as *the Spirit of the Lord.* But it is aſked, What connection is there between muſical inſtruments, and devils or evil ſpirits? How can ſounds and ſymphonies have the power of removing or chaſing away an evil ſpirit? For by David's playing upon the harp (ver. 23.) " Saul was refreſhed, and was well, and " the evil ſpirit departed from him." But when the diſtemper is much the ſame, whether occaſioned by demoniacal or by natural means, why may not muſic have the power of relieving and refreſhing men in the one caſe as well as in the other? Why may not muſic

(8) Mede's Works, Diſc. VI. p. 29 & 30. and 636. Edit. 1672.

have the power of affecting a ſpirit as well as matter, of diverting and changing the thoughts of the mind as well as the humors of the body? It ſhould ſeem that the ſpirit muſt be firſt affected; for if the mind be wholly inattentive, or otherwiſe engaged and employed, the moſt heavenly muſic is as nothing, and can produce no kind of effect upon the body.

The true ſtate of the demoniacs is ſeen more fully in the goſpels. Our bleſſed Saviour and his diſciples all along ſpeak of them as perſons really poſſeſſed, and that in ſo plain a manner as cannot eaſily be miſtaken. St. Luke, who was himſelf a phyſician, and conſequently knew how to diſtinguiſh natural diſeaſes from others, maketh uſe of the ſame language, and his ſtile and manner of writing are much commended by the moſt learned of the ſame profeſſion. (9) Dr. Mead ſays of him, that as a phyſician he well underſtood the force and meaning of words; and Dr. Freind for the ſame reaſon obſerves that "his lan-"guage is more ſimple, and more correct, as well as more phyſical," than that of the other evangeliſts: And yet he is as full and copious, as exact and particular in his account of the demoniacs, as any of them. It is true indeed, when an inveterate diſeaſe is cured inſtantly by a word's ſpeaking, the cure muſt certainly be miraculous, and owing to the interpoſition of a divine power, whatever may have been the cauſe of the diſeaſe, whether it aroſe from natural means, or proceeded from the influence of evil ſpirits: but of the two it ſhould ſeem a more difficult and arduous province, more great and godlike to diſpoſſeſs evil ſpirits, than to cure common diſeaſes. A diſtinction too is made between *curing of diſeaſes* and *the caſting out of devils*, as if they were different kinds of operations, and the one much harder to be performed than the other. In St. Matthew's goſpel we read, (VIII. 16.) that "when the even was come, they brought unto him many that were "poſſeſſed with devils; and he caſt out the ſpirits with his word, and "healed all that were ſick." In the parallel place of St. Mark we read, (I. 32, 34.) that "at even, when the ſun did ſet, they brought "unto him all that were diſeaſed, and them that were poſſeſſed with

(9) Mead. Medic. Sacr. Cap. 15. p. 107. Freind's Hiſt. of Phyſic, Vol. I. p. 224.

"devils;

" devils; and he healed many that were ſick of divers diſeaſes, and " caſt out many devils." Here is as manifeſt a diſtinction made between *healing* and *caſting out* as between *diſeaſes* and *devils*: but the diſtinction is marked ſtill more ſtrongly in the parallel place of St. Luke, (IV. 40, 41.) " Now when the ſun was ſetting, all they that " had any ſick with divers diſeaſes, brought them unto him; and he " laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them; And devils " alſo came out of many, crying out and ſaying, Thou art Chriſt the " Son of God." Would any phyſician or correct writer have expreſſed himſelf after this manner, if nothing more had been intended than the healing of common diſeaſes? Common diſeaſes, ſuch as the leproſy and palſy and the like, are ſaid to be *cleanſed* and *healed*, but are never ſaid to be *caſt out*, and to *come out crying and ſaying* any thing. When our Saviour had called unto him his twelve diſciples, (Matt. X. 1, 8.) " he gave unto them power againſt unclean ſpirits to caſt them out, " and to heal all manner of ſickneſs and all manner of diſeaſes:" and among his other directions he gave them the following, " Heal the " ſick, cleanſe the lepers, raiſe the dead, caſt out devils." " He or- " dained twelve," ſaith St. Mark (III. 14, 15.) " that they ſhould be " with him, and that he might ſend them forth to preach, and to " have power to heal ſickneſſes, and to caſt out devils:" and it is ſaid afterwards (VI. 13) that " they caſt out many devils, and anointed " with oil many that were ſick, and healed them." When our Saviour had ſent forth his ſeventy diſciples to heal the ſick, and to preach the kingdom of God, (Luke X. 17.) " they returned again with joy, " ſaying, Lord, even the devils are ſubject unto us through thy " name;" as if this was the higheſt inſtance of power, and far beyond what they could have expected. In his laſt commiſſion to his diſciples our Saviour ſtill preſerves the ſame diſtinction, (Mark XVI. 17, 18.) " In my name ſhall they caſt out devils,—they ſhall lay hands " on the ſick, and they ſhall recover."

But it is pretended, that in this manner of ſpeaking our Saviour complied only with the cuſtomary language of his country, it being no part of his commiſſion, nor the deſign of the ſacred writers, to correct

correct miſtakes in phyſic, any more than in aſtronomy or any other ſcience. But the caſes are vaſtly different. This or that ſyſtem of aſtronomy, whether true or falſe, whether the Copernican or Ptolemaic or any other, hath no kind of influence upon Chriſtian faith and practice. Whether the ſun or earth be at reſt, it maketh no difference to us, we have ſtill the ſame race to run, the ſame goal to reach, and the ſame prize ſet before us of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus. But miſtaken notions of demons or devils may much affect our religious and moral character, may fill our minds with vain terrors and ſuperſtitions, debaſe and corrupt our morals as well as our underſtandings, and prove the ſource of infinite calamity and miſery here and hereafter. A more plauſible argument may be drawn from the ſtory of the blind man in St. John's goſpel, (IX. 1, 2, 3.) "As Jeſus paſſed by, he ſaw a man, which was blind from "his birth: And his diſciples aſked him ſaying, Maſter, who did "ſin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind? Jeſus an-"ſwered, Neither hath this man ſinned, nor his parents; but "that the works of God ſhould be made manifeſt in him." We ſee, the diſciples had a notion, as many of the Jews then had, of a ſtate of exiſtence prior to this life; and our Saviour ſeemeth to allow it, at leaſt doth not refute and rectify it: but as we have no remembrance, no conſciouſneſs of our former exiſtence, it is all one to us whether there be ſuch a ſtate or not; it is a matter merely of ſpeculation, and no way relates to practice: and ſome ingenious Chriſtian divines as well as ſome learned Heathen philoſophers have entertained the ſame opinion, I will not ſay truly, but yet very innocently, and without any prejudice to religion. Whereas we can neither with innocence nor with ſafety attribute powers to devils which they have not, nor take from them what they really have: and it is not eaſy to ſay which of the two may expoſe us to greater evils and dangers. (1 John III. 8.) "For this purpoſe the Son of God was ma-"nifeſted, that he might deſtroy the works of the devil:" but it is inlarging and adding to the works of the devil, if he never had ſuch a power, to aſcribe to him the power of influencing and poſſeſſing the

ſouls

ſouls and bodies of men. Next in power and goodneſs to the caſting of real devils out of the bodies, would have been the deſtroying and rooting of this falſe notion out of the minds of men. If it had been impoſſible to overcome the prejudices of the people, yet our Saviour might, either by himſelf or by the Holy Ghoſt afterwards, have diſcloſed the truth to his diſciples. His goodneſs would hardly have ſuffered them to remain in ſo pernicious an error.

But our Saviour was ſo far from reproving or correcting this notion, that he hath confirmed and eſtabliſhed it beyond all reaſonable contradiction. He was ſo far from giving other inſtructions to his diſciples, that he hath ſaid and done more than enough to convince them of the reality of theſe poſſeſſions. When he had called his twelve diſciples, (Matt. X. 1.) " he gave them power againſt un-" clean ſpirits to caſt them out," and he gave it beſides in commiſſion to them (ver. 8.) " to caſt out devils:" and would he have given ſuch a power and ſuch a commiſſion, if there had been no devils to caſt out, and the whole had been a vain imagination? When he had ſent forth the ſeventy diſciples, and they (Luke X. 17.) " returned " again with joy, ſaying, Lord even the devils are ſubject unto us " through thy name," he was ſo far from repreſſing their joy, that he rather encouraged it, and fixed it upon its proper foundation. (ver. 18, 19, 20.) " I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I " give unto you power to tread on ſerpents and ſcorpions, and over all " the power of the enemy; and nothing ſhall by any means hurt you. " Notwithſtanding in this rejoice not, that the ſpirits are ſubject unto " you; but rather rejoice, becauſe your names are written in heaven." But what is the ſenſe or meaning of all this phraſeology, if nothing more was performed than ſome cures of epilepſy and madneſs? How can the healing of the falling ſickneſs be ſaid to be *the fall of Satan* from his power and dominion? How can the curing of bodily diſeaſes be ſaid to be *the ſubjection of the ſpirits*, and a victory and triumph *over all the power of the enemy?* Our Saviour often commands the unclean ſpirits to come out of a man: " Hold thy peace, (Luke IV. 35.) and come " out of him:" but where is the reaſon or propriety of this command,

if

if there were no ſpirits to come out, and only ſome diſtemper to be cured? When the Jews charged our Saviour "with having a devil," (John VIII. 48.) he denies the charge indeed, and diſproves it: but upon this ſuppoſition the ſhorter and better anſwer would have been, that there was no ſuch poſſeſſion, there was no ſuch thing as *having a devil.* In like manner, when the phariſees accuſed him (Matt. XII. 24.) of "caſting out devils by the prince of the devils;" the proper reply would have been to have denied the principle inſtead of refuting it, and directly to have told the truth, if it had been the truth, that the devil was not in the leaſt concerned one way or other: but he admits the truth of his caſting out devils, and only expoſes the unreaſonableneſs and abſurdity of imputing it to the prince of the devils. And would he have employed ſo many arguments upon a ſubject that had not the leaſt foundation in truth or the nature of things? Would he have attempted to prove the truth of his divine miſſion from a falſe chimæra, from a thing that was not? Would he have argued upon the reality of his caſting out devils, if it had been only a vulgar notion, an idle dream, a wild fancy, and no reality in it; or have pretended, that he "caſt out devils by the Spirit of God," and that therefore "the "kingdom of God was come?" The devil that was caſt out might have reaſoned in this manner; but not He, who is emphatically ſtiled (John XIV. 6.) "the way, and the truth, and the life."

Beſides, if the demoniacs were mere madmen and lunatics, how came they to be ſo much better and ſo much earlier acquainted with our Lord's true character and office, than the generality of the people, or even the diſciples themſelves? His fame indeed went abroad, but his real ſtate and condition were little known and underſtood, while we find the demoniacs publicly proclaiming him to be "the Chriſt, the "Holy One of God, the Son of the moſt High God." He had but newly entered on his miniſtry, when according to St. Mark (I. 23, 24.) "there was in the ſynagogue a man with an unclean ſpirit; and he "cried out, ſaying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, "thou Jeſus of Nazareth? art thou come to deſtroy us? I know thee "who thou art, the Holy One of God:" and according to St. Luke (IV.

(IV. 41.) " devils alſo came out of many, crying out and ſaying, " Thou art Chriſt, the Son of God." It was ſome time after this that our Saviour aſked his diſciples, (Matt. XVI. 13, 14.) " Whom " do men ſay that I, the ſon of man, am? And they ſaid, Some " ſay that thou art John the baptiſt; ſome, Elias; and others, Je- " remias, or one of the prophets." We ſee, that they regarded him as no more than a prophet; they did not generally conceive him to be the Meſſiah; the demoniacs had fuller and juſter notions of the ſacredneſs of his perſon, and of the dignity of his character. Afterwards, when he aſked his diſciples (ver. 15, 16, 17.) " But whom " ſay ye that I am? Simon Peter anſwered and ſaid, Thou art the " Chriſt, the Son of the living God. And Jeſus anſwered and ſaid " unto him, Bleſſed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for fleſh and blood " hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." It was impoſſible therefore for mere madmen to have attained to this extraordinary degree of knowlege, but the diſcovery might eaſily have been made by beings of ſo much ſuperior capacities and intellects as the fallen angels. If the thing had been generally known, it would have been to little purpoſe for our Lord to have charged the demoniacs to " hold their peace:" but he impoſed ſilence upon them, for the ſame reaſon that he injoined ſecrecy to his diſciples, leſt the publication of the truth ſhould provoke the rage and malice of his enemies to put a period to his life, before his hour was come, before he had finiſhed the due courſe of his miniſtry. The diſciples might have publiſhed it with a good deſign for the glory of their maſter, but the devils would moſt probably have publiſhed it maliciouſly, and with intent to haſten on his deſtruction.

In this controverſy we find two caſes of madneſs and epilepſy particularly inſiſted on, in order to prove that theſe poſſeſſions were uſually the one or the other: and it is not denied, that there are demoniacs who may labor under epilepſy and madneſs; but then, I ſay, they are not mere epilepſy and madneſs; they are ſomething more than natural diſeaſes; there are effects which

plainly point out and refer to ſome ſuperior cauſe, as we ſhall be more fully convinced by taking the two caſes into conſideration.

While our Saviour was with Peter, James and John upon the mountain, which was the ſcene of his transfiguration, a certain man brought his young ſon to the diſciples that they ſhould cure him, and they could not. His caſe by the deſcription of it was plainly epileptic, but it was ſomething more than a common epilepſy, as is evident from ſeveral circumſtances. All the three evangeliſts (Matt. XVII. Mark IX. Luke IX.) expreſly aſcribe it to "a devil, an un-"clean ſpirit, a dumb and deaf ſpirit;" and a diſtinction is made between the actions of the ſpirit as the agent, and of the demoniac as the patient. In St. Mark's account (ver. 18.) "whereſoever he "(the ſpirit) taketh him, he teareth him; and he (the demoniac) "foameth, and gnaſheth with his teeth, and pineth away." St. Luke diſtinguiſheth in like manner (ver. 39.) "And lo, a ſpirit "taketh him, and he ſuddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that "he foameth again, and bruiſing him, hardly departeth from him." He had long labored under this diſeaſe, for it had grown up with him from his childhood: and in ſuch caſes the phyſicians agree, that it is very difficult, if not impoſſible to be cured. Yet Jeſus wrought the cure; and the miraculouſneſs of the cure may obtain the greater credit to the miraculouſneſs of the means, by which the cure was wrought. "Jeſus rebuked the devil," ſaith St. Matthew, (ver. 18.) "and he departed out of him, and the child was cured "from that very hour." Here are two diſtinct events, which are not to be confounded together, the diſpoſſeſſing of the evil ſpirit, and the cure of the young man in conſequence of it. St. Mark alſo repreſents Jeſus (ver. 25.) as "rebuking the foul ſpirit, and ſaying unto "him, Thou dumb and deaf ſpirit, I charge thee, come out of him, "and enter no more into him." A falſe and fallacious manner of expreſſion, and altogether unworthy of our Lord, if there were really no ſpirit to come out or enter in again, and only a bodily diſeaſe to be cured. The cure too is altogether unlike the cure of a natural diſeaſe. (ver. 26, 27.) "And the ſpirit cried, and rent him ſore, and

"came

" came out of him; and he was as one dead, inſomuch that many " ſaid, He is dead. But Jeſus took him by the hand, and liſted him " up; and he aroſe." A natural diſeaſe doth not leave a patient with ſuch ſudden force and violence; but an evil ſpirit might give as it were a parting blow, the laſt effort of his malignity. " And they were all " amazed," ſaith St. Luke, (ver. 43.) " at the mighty power of " God:" but the power of God appears much mightier in the diſpoſſeſſing of an evil ſpirit and the curing of an epilepſy at the ſame time, than in the curing of an epilepſy alone. When the diſciples afterwards aſked our Lord in private, (Matt. XVII. 19, 20, 21.) " Why could " not we caſt him out?" He replied, " Becauſe of your unbelief;" if ye had faith, ye ſhould remove mountains, and nothing ſhould be impoſſible unto you. " Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer " and faſting." The phyſician who propoſed (1) inſtead of εν προσευχῃ και νηϛειᾳ *by prayer and faſting* to read εν προσεχει νηϛειᾳ *by conſtant faſting*, propoſed it only as the play of a ſportive fancy, was not in earneſt, and could not really approve it himſelf. For conſtant faſting never yet cured any one, nor ever can of an inveterate epilepſy; it will ſooner put an end to the man, than to his diſtemper. *Prayer* and *faſting* are often joined together in ſcripture, as mutual helps, and requiſites in any arduous undertaking, faſting making prayer more pure and intenſe more fervent and effectual; and without doubt they are the proper means to ſtrengthen and increaſe our faith, and abſolutely neceſſary to procure any miraculous gifts and graces. Our Saviour promiſeth his diſciples in another place, (Matt. XXI. 21, 22.) " If ye have faith and " doubt not, ye ſhall ſay unto this mountain, Be thou removed, " and be thou caſt into the ſea, it ſhall be done: And all things what- " ſoever ye ſhall aſk in prayer, believing, ye ſhall receive." St. James mentions it, as one of the miraculous gifts in his time, and as an encouragement to pray over the ſick, (V. 15.) " that the prayer of faith " ſhall ſave the ſick, and the Lord ſhall raiſe him up." Theſe then are the conditions without which no miraculous powers were obtained, and much more were they neceſſary to the performance of ſuch an extraordinary miracle as this.

(1) Dr. Sykes's Inquiry into the meaning of Demoniacs, p. 47.

The caſe of the madman or madmen is ſtill ſtronger, and more inexplicable upon the principles of mere diſeaſe, mere madneſs. According to St. Matthew (VIII. 28.) there were *two* of them; Mark (V. 2.) and Luke (VIII. 27.) mention only *one*, one being perhaps more frantic and outrageous than the other; but this difference maketh little difference in the caſe. It is ſaid of him (Mark, ver. 3, 4.) that "he had his dwelling among the tombs, and no man could bind him, "no not with chains: Becauſe that he had been often bound with "fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked aſunder by him, "and the fetters broken in pieces; neither could any man tame him." Here was manifeſtly an exertion of ſtrength far above all the natural powers of man. His plucking aſunder and breaking in pieces the fetters and chains was ſomething very extraordinary; but if he had done it once, they might have ſecured him with ſtronger chains; but he did it *often*; *neither could any man tame him.* He muſt be more than a mere madman, who was ſo wholly unconquerable; eſpecially if (2) Dr. Mead's obſervation be true, that "there is the leſs neceſſity for "torments and ſtripes, becauſe all madmen are of ſuch a cowardly "diſpoſition; that even the moſt frantic and miſchievous, after being "*once* or *twice* tied, ſurrender at diſcretion, and thence forward re-"frain from committing any outrage through fear of puniſhment." "When he ſaw Jeſus afar off, (Mark, ver. 6.) he ran and worſhipped "him." But how came a madman, who had been *of a long time* in that condition, who *ware no clothes, neither abode in any houſe*, but *always night and day was in the mountains and in the tombs*, and *was exceeding fierce, ſo that no man might paſs by that way*; how came ſuch a man in ſuch a ſituation and condition to have any knowlege of the perſon and character of Jeſus, who had but lately entered upon his miniſtry; and from ſo ferocious creature become all of a ſudden ſo gentle and tractable as to fall down and worſhip him? Upon Jeſus commanding the unclean ſpirit to come out of the man, the man, or rather the

(2) Mead. Medic. Sacr. Tormenta vero et plagæ ideo minus ſunt neceſſaria, quod animi tam puſilli, et imbelles ſunt omnes inſani; ut etiam acerrime furentes, ſemel aut iterum vincti, quaſi victi ſe dedant, et in poſterum meticuloſi ab injuriis inferendis deſiſtant. Cap. 9. p. 80. with Stack's tranſlation.

demon

demon ſpeaking through the man,—for according to (3) Plato, the demoniacs do not ſpeak their own language or dialect, but that of the demons who have entered into them—cried out, (ver. 6.) "What "have I to do with thee, Jeſus, thou Son of the moſt High God? "I adjure thee by God that thou torment me not:" or as St. Matthew expreſſeth it, (ver. 29.) "What have I to do with thee, Jeſus, "thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before "the time?" And (Luke, ver. 30.) "they beſought him that "he would not command them to go out into the deep," the abyſs or bottomleſs pit. Theſe ſayings might be dictated by evil ſpirits, but otherwiſe could not proceed out of the mouth of madmen. Spoken of the former, they are very intelligible, having plainly ſome reference to their future ſtate and puniſhment: but they are in no ſhape applicable to the latter, and neither could ſuch things, which were then but little known, enter into the ideas of madmen, who generally in their wildeſt flights have yet ſome ſenſe and meaning. It farther appears that ſeveral evil ſpirits had taken poſſeſſion of this man. For St. Luke introduceth the ſtory by ſaying, (ver. 27.) he "had devils long "time;" and upon his being aſked What was his name, he anſwered "Legion, for we are many," as it is in St. Mark; or as it is in St. Luke, (ver. 30.) "becauſe many devils were entered into him," which reaſon is aſſigned not by the man, but by the evangeliſt. A certain number is put for an uncertain, as when it is ſaid (Luke VIII. 2.) that out of Mary Magdalen, "went ſeven devils," and (Matt. XII. 45.) the unclean ſpirit "taketh with him ſeven other ſpirits" more wicked than himſelf. It is certain then, that a man may be poſſeſſed by a number of demons; and the Heathens alſo had ſomething of the ſame notion, for we find the phraſe of (4) *larvarum plena*, *full of larvæ*, full of ſpectres or goblins: but whoever heard of *many* madneſſes, of *ſeven* madneſſes, or *a legion* of madneſſes? It is natural for evil ſpirits to delight in miſchief, and accordingly they "beſought Jeſus much (Mark,

(3) Plato apud Clem. Alex. την αυλων ου φθεγγοιλαι φωνην εδε διαλεκλον, αλλα την των ὑπεισιενλων δαιμονων. Strom. I. p. 338. Edit. Par. p. 405. Edit. Potter.

(4) Nam hæc quidem ædipol *larvarum plena eſt*. Plaut. Amphit. Act. 2. Sc. 2. ver. 145.

"ver.

" ver. 10.) that he would not ſend them away out of the country," but that he would give them leave to paſs into a herd of ſwine that was feeding nigh unto the mountains. For good reaſons without doubt (ſome of which we may diſcern) he permitted them; and they went out of the man, and entered into the ſwine, and the whole herd, to the number of " about two thouſand, ran violently down a ſteep " place into the ſea, and periſhed in the waters." Theſe things were a full demonſtration of the great power as well as malice of theſe wicked ſpirits: but if there was nothing more than madneſs in the caſe, how could perſonal actions and ſpeeches be attributed to it? how could Jeſus hold diſcourſe with a mere frenzy? how could a diſeaſe wiſh to ſtay in the country, and do farther miſchief? anſwer queſtions, make uſe of intreaties, leave the body wherein it was and yet have a diſtinct being, enter into the whole herd of ſwine, and force animals, which are the moſt difficult to be driven, down a ſteep place into the ſea. If theſe were the ſayings and actions of devils, the whole narration is rational and conſiſtent; but underſtood of a frenzy only, the ſtory is falſe and frivolous: no ſenſible writers, and much leſs could inſpired writers have written in this manner; and Woolſton himſelf could hardly have expoſed the ſacred text to ſtronger ridicule.

If the queſtion ſhould be aſked, How it came to paſs, that theſe demoniacal caſes abounded ſo much more at the commencement of the Chriſtian æra, than at any other period before or ſince; it may be fairly anſwered, that if theſe caſes had been peculiar to the time of our Saviour, yet that would have been no good argument againſt the truth of the facts. For there are certain diſtempers, which have been epidemic in one age, and yet unknown in any other. The ſweating (5) ſickneſs, for example, was never heard of before the fifteenth century in any age or nation; and after returning now and then, for the ſpace of ſome years, has ever ſince entirely diſappeared, and poſſibly may never return any more. But we read of ſome demoniacs, among the Gentiles as well as among the Jews, before our Saviour's

(5) See Freind's Hiſt. of Phyſic, Vol. II. p. 332.

time,

time, and of many more afterwards; and if we hear more of them at that time particularly, the reaſon may be, becauſe the exiſtence and operations of evil ſpirits began then to be better known and underſtood; they were then living who had the giſt of *diſcerning of ſpirits*; they were indued with ſuch powers, as ſerved to diſcover and expoſe the malignity of theſe wicked beings; they who could adminiſter the cure, and perfect the recovery, muſt be beſt acquainted with the nature and cauſe of the diſeaſe; and their accounts are the only facts of this kind, which can abſolutely be depended upon as genuin and true. There have been many pretended demoniacs, and many pretended exorciſts; perſons who have been inſtructed to counterfeit the moſt horrid geſticulations and diſtortions of body, as if they were ſeiſed and agitated by devils, and others who by the uſe of holy water and the muttering of certain prayers have reſtored and ſet them at liberty. But counterfeits are generally formed upon truths; and there may have been ſome real poſſeſſions in former times, there may be ſuch at this preſent time; but we have not the faculty that I ſpeak of, *diſcerning of ſpirits*, we cannot caſt them out, and conſequently cannot pronounce with certainty what are demoniacal poſſeſſions, and what are not. If there be no ſuch poſſeſſions now in the world, this may be reckoned among the many other excellencies and advantages of the Chriſtian religion, that it hath ſo curbed and reſtrained the powers of evil ſpirits. They had indeed at the time of our Saviour's appearance a particular reaſon for exerting their power and malice in oppoſition to the firſt erection and eſtabliſhment of the kingdom of God; and they might be permitted to exert them to the utmoſt, in order more effectually to diſplay the ſuperior power and goodneſs of *him whom God ſent into the world*, to render their defeat more conſpicuous, and to gain the greater credit to him and his diſciples. No ſooner had Jeſus entered upon his miniſtry, and caſt out an unclean ſpirit in the ſynagogue at Capernaum, than the people (Matt. I. 27.) "were all amazed, inſomuch that they "queſtioned among themſelves, ſaying, What thing is this? what "new doctrin is this? for with authority commandeth he even the "unclean ſpirits, and they do obey him." Afterwards when he had healed

healed a dumb man, poſſeſſed with a devil, (Matt. IX. 33.) " the " multitudes marveled, ſaying, It was never ſo ſeen in Iſrael." Another time (Matt. XII. 22, 23.) there " was brought unto him one " poſſeſſed with a devil, blind and dumb; and he healed him, inſo- " much that the blind and dumb both ſpake and ſaw: And all the " people were amazed and ſaid, Is not this the ſon of David?" None of his miracles were a ſtronger and more illuſtrious proof of his divine miſſion; none of them were a more immediate conqueſt of Satan, or tended more to the ſubverſion of his kingdom: and aſcribing this caſting out of devils to the power of the devils, was " the ſin never to be " forgiven, the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt." (1 John III. 8.) " For this purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted that he might de- " ſtroy the works of the devil:" and this manifeſtation could not be made more ſignal and glorious than by thus viſibly and publicly caſting out devils. His caſting them out of the bodies was a proper type and emblem of his expelling them alſo from the ſouls of men: it was (as I may apply the words) an outward and viſible ſign of an inward and ſpiritual grace. Nothing could more experimentally convince us, that " greater is He that is in us than he that is in the world." Nothing could be a ſurer pledge and earneſt of his final victory and triumph over all the powers of death and hell. (1 Cor. XV. 57.) " Thanks be to God " which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt."

DISSERTATION XVI.

On the Blaſphemy againſt the HOLY GHOST.

FEW paſſages of ſcripture are more known and remembred than that ſolemn declaration of our Saviour concerning what is uſually called *the Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt.* (Matt. XII. 31, 32.) " Where- " fore

" fore I ſay unto you, All manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be for-
" given unto men; but the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall
" not be forgiven unto men: And whoſoever ſpeaketh a word againſt
" the Son of man, it ſhall be forgiven him; but whoſoever ſpeaketh
" againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven him neither
" in this world neither in the world to come." A text of ſcripture than which none perhaps hath been more perplexed by the learned and more miſapplied by the ignorant, and which hath therefore proved the unhappy occaſion of deſpair to ſeveral melancholy Chriſtians imagining themſelves to be guilty of the ſin here condemned, *the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt.* It will be proper therefore to inquire carefully into the ſenſe of this paſſage, for our Lord's ſake to vindicate his word from falſe interpretations, from meanings which he never meant, as well as for our own ſake to preſerve ourſelves from falſe notions, from fearing where no fear is. And what better way can we take to underſtand this or any text of ſcripture, than conſulting the ſcripture itſelf, and conſidering the occaſion of the words and their connexion with what precedes and with what follows? For the general miſtake in interpreting ſcripture is looking upon the ſentences as independent ſentences, and not ſufficiently regarding the context; and this is the very thing that hath principally obſcured and perplexed this particular point. Men obſerved ſome deadly ſin to be here condemned, and ſo ſet themſelves to imagin what ſin was moſt deadly, and then concluded that that very ſin muſt needs be the ſin here condemned; and by theſe means, one man thinking one ſin the worſt and another another, different ſins have by different men been thought the ſin againſt the Holy Ghoſt: whereas had they diligently peruſed the context, and conſidered upon what occaſion the words were ſpoken and to whom they were ſpoken, what leadeth to them and what followeth, I apprehend there would have remained little difficulty, and a great deal of diſpute and deſpair (of unneceſſary diſpute and groundleſs deſpair) might happily have been prevented. Let us therefore take a view of the ſtory in all its circumſtances, and ſee how eaſily this key will let us into the true ſenſe of the text.

There was a man poſſeſſed with a devil, poſſeſſed to ſuch a degree that through the violence of his diſeaſe he was both blind and dumb, and his friends brought him to Jeſus, and Jeſus healed him, ſo that immediately he recovered both his ſight and his ſpeech. (ver. 22.) "Then was brought unto him one poſſeſſed with a devil, blind and "dumb; and he healed him, inſomuch that the blind and dumb both "ſpake and ſaw." At this miracle the people were all in great admiration and cried out, "Is not this the ſon of David?" that is, Is not this the Meſſiah? for the Meſſiah was to be of the houſe and lineage of David. We know that the Meſſiah is to do great miracles when he cometh, and is not this perſon, who can do ſuch great miracles, himſelf the Meſſiah? (ver. 23.) "And all the people were amazed and "ſaid, Is not this the ſon of David?"

But the Phariſees, the proud the envious Phariſees, were ſo far from being convinced and owning their conviction, that on the contrary when they heard the people talk in this manner, they ſuggeſted to them, that Jeſus did not caſt out devils by the Spirit of God but by combination with the ruler and chief of the devils. (ver. 24.) "But "when the Phariſees heard it, they ſaid This fellow doth not caſt out "devils but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils." Jeſus indeed did not hear them ſay this, for they ſaid it aſide to the people, but he "knew their thoughts," ſays the Evangeliſt, "and called them unto "him," as it is in the parallel place of St. Mark, (III. 23.) and refutes their unreaſonable calumny ſeveral ways.

Firſt he argues againſt it from a received axiom, from a general to a particular. By factions and diviſions every kingdom is ruined, how then can the kingdom of Satan ſubſiſt by factions and diviſions? Can it be ſuppoſed that the devils would do what is manifeſtly againſt their own intereſt, and is it not manifeſtly againſt their own intereſt for devil to diſpoſſeſs devil for Satan to caſt out Satan? And this firſt argument of our Saviour may be reduced into form according to the ſtricteſt rules of arguing. Every kingdom or houſe divided againſt itſelf cannot ſtand; but if Satan caſt out Satan, his kingdom is divided againſt itſelf; and therefore, if Satan caſt out Satan, his kingdom cannot ſtand.

(ver.

(ver. 25, 26.) " Every kingdom divided againſt itſelf is brought to de-
" ſolation; and every city or houſe divided againſt itſelf ſhall not ſtand:
" And if Satan caſt out Satan, he is divided againſt himſelf, how ſhall
" then his kingdom ſtand?"

Another argument our Saviour urges againſt this malicious calumny of the Phariſees, by way of retortion, by way of argumentum ad homines; If I caſt out devils by the power of the devils, by what power do thoſe of your own ſect and party, your own diſciples and followers caſt them out? They ſometimes pretend to exorciſe devils, and what they do in this kind you aſcribe to the power of God; and why in reaſon and equity ſhould you not judge the ſame of my caſting out of devils as of theirs? (ver. 27.) " And if I by Beelzebub caſt out devils,
" by whom do your children caſt them out? therefore they ſhall be
" your judges;" therefore they will be ſufficient to convict and condemn you of partiality and unjuſt judgment. But if it is by the Spirit of God that I caſt out devils, then this is an undeniable proof, that the kingdom of God ſo often ſpoken of in the prophets, the kingdom of the Meſſiah for the eſtabliſhment of truth and righteouſneſs is come. (ver. 28.) " But if I caſt out devils by the Spirit of God, then the
" kingdom of God is come unto you." But here a difficulty will naturally ariſe, and it may be inquired why was Jeſus's caſting out of devils a proof that the kingdom of God was come any more than the Phariſees' caſting out of devils was a proof of the ſame? And it may be anſwered, It is moſt probable that theſe words—" And if Beelzebub
" caſt out devils, by whom do your children caſt them out? therefore
" they ſhall be your judges"—I ſay it is moſt probable that theſe words were ſpoken (as the moſt learned interpreters have imagined them to be ſpoken) in irony; ſome of the Phariſees pretending to exorciſe devils, and ſome of the Jews perhaps believing that they really did ſo: But ſuppoſing that the words were ſpoken in earneſt, and that ſome of the Phariſees ſometimes by permiſſion of God did really caſt out devils, yet inſtances of this latter ſort were much rarer than of the former, and beſides they did not any of them ſet up for the Meſſiah, as Jeſus did, otherwiſe to be ſure God would not have countenanced their falſe pre-

tenſion with a miracle. Whether any of the Jews did really caſt out devils, hiſtory has not ſufficiently informed us: We know that the ſons of Sceva attempted it, but failed in the attempt; for (Acts XIX. 16.) "the man in whom the evil ſpirit was, leapt on them, and overcame "them, and prevailed againſt them." It is enough for our Saviour's purpoſe, and ſufficient for his argument, if the Jews only believed that ſome of their own people might caſt out devils, whether they really did ſo, or not; for if ever they admitted any thing in this kind to be wrought by the finger of God, how could they attribute the ſame things done by him to the operation of the devil?

But to proceed in our Saviour's reply to the Phariſees. As one's entring into a ſtrong man's houſe, and binding him and ſpoiling his goods manifeſtly prove that he, who ſo enters and diſpoſſeſſes the other, is the ſtronger and more powerful of the two: So (would our Saviour be underſtood to infer) my ſpoiling of the power of the devils, expelling them from the bodies and deſtroying their dominion over the ſouls of men, are evident proofs that there can be no deceit, no colluſion between us, and that I act with a power and authority ſuperior to theirs. (ver. 29.) "Or elſe how can one enter into a ſtrong man's houſe and "ſpoil his goods, except he firſt bind the ſtrong man? and then he "will ſpoil his houſe." Again you have a proverb among you, "He "that is not with me is againſt me, and he that gathereth not with "me ſcattereth abroad;" (ver. 30.) And how much more then am I againſt Satan, who not only am *not with* him but am actually *againſt* him, not only not act in conjunction with him but in direct oppoſition to him.

"Wherefore I ſay unto you;" he is now drawing a concluſion from the foregoing diſcourſe: *Wherefore* I ſay unto you; as if he had ſaid, It appears by theſe arguments how unreaſonable and malicious this calumny of yours is in aſcribing my caſting out of devils to the power of the devils, and *therefore* I declare unto you, "All manner of ſin and "blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven unto men, but the blaſphemy againſt "the Holy Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven unto men." Our Saviour does not, cannot mean abſolutely, that every ſin ſhall be forgiven except the

the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, for it is certain there are other ſins beſides this which are damnable and without repentance will not be forgiven: but his meaning is, all manner of ſin and blaſphemy will *more eaſily* be forgiven than the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt; it being an uſual Hebraiſm (as Grotius excellently obſerves) to ſay that this ſhall be and that ſhall not be, when they mean only that this ſhall happen ſooner or more eaſily than that; and of this manner of ſpeaking there are ſeveral inſtances in ſcripture, and particularly in theſe words of our Saviour, (Mark XIII. 31.) "Heaven and earth ſhall paſs "away but my words ſhall not paſs away," that is, heaven and earth ſhall *more eaſily* paſs away than my words ſhall paſs away, as it is expreſſed by St. Luke in a parallel caſe (XVI. 17.) "It is eaſier "for heaven and earth to paſs, than one tittle of the law to fail." "And whoſoever ſpeaketh a word againſt the Son of man," whoſoever blaſphemeth me who am the Son of man, calling me carpenter's ſon, glutton, wine-bibber, friend of publicans and ſinners and the like, "it "ſhall be forgiven him," that is ſhall *more eaſily* be forgiven him, as it hath been explained already: "but whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the "Holy Ghoſt," but whoſoever blaſphemeth the Holy Ghoſt, aſcribing my caſting out of devils evidently wrought by the Spirit of God not to the Spirit of God but to the prince of the devils, "it ſhall not be "forgiven him," that is it ſhall *more hardly* be forgiven him; "it "ſhall not be forgiven him neither in this world, neither in the world "to come," to expreſs ſtill more the difficulty of forgiveneſs in this caſe, for the Jews had a notion that ſome ſins which would not be forgiven in *this world* and in the preſent age of the law, would be forgiven in the future age of the Meſſiah and in the *world to come.*

He proceeds thus. Either ſpeak not ſuch blaſphemies, or make not ſuch pretences to religion, for as a tree is known by its fruits, ſo is a man by his words. (ver. 8.) "Either make the tree good and his "fruit good, or elſe make the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt; "for the tree is known by his fruit." "O generation of vipers," O ye hypocrits like vipers, whoſe ſkin indeed is beautiful to behold, but whoſe mouth is poiſon, "O generation of vipers (ver. 34.) how can

"ye

" ye being evil ſpeak good things? for out of the abundance of the " heart the mouth ſpeaketh. A good man out of the good trea- " ſure of the heart bringeth forth good things," ſpeaketh good things; " but an evil man out of the evil treaſure bringeth forth " evil things," out of the evil treaſure of the heart ſpeaketh evil things, (ver. 35.) " But I ſay unto you (ver. 36.) that every idle " word," that is every vain falſe wicked word, " that men ſhall " ſpeak, they ſhall give account thereof in the day of judgment;" and how much more then of ſuch horrid calumnies and blaſphemies as yours? For your words as well as your actions will help to juſtify or condemn you. (ver. 37.) " For by thy words thou ſhalt be juſti- " fied, and by thy words thou ſhalt be condemned."

And thus have I explained at large the occaſion of the words and their connexion with what precedes and with what follows, and by the help of this key we have opened the general deſign of the text: but for the farther clearing of ſome particular difficulties and for our fuller ſatisfaction in this abſtruſe point of doctrin, it may be proper to add the following conſiderations.

1. That which is thus ſeverely cenſured by our bleſſed Saviour in the text is not ſo properly the *ſin* againſt the Holy Ghoſt as the *blaſphemy* againſt the Holy Ghoſt. Men indeed talk much of the *ſin* againſt the Holy Ghoſt; but the ſcriptures never once make uſe of any ſuch expreſſion. Our bleſſed Saviour in all the places where he ſpeaketh of it calleth it the *blaſphemy* againſt the Holy Ghoſt: and this is the more remarkable, becauſe though he mentions *both ſin and blaſphemy* in the former part of the ſentence, " All manner of ſin and blaſphemy " ſhall be forgiven unto men," yet in the latter part of the ſentence he mentions *only blaſphemy*, " but the blaſphemy againſt the Holy " Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven unto men;" and all the ſubſequent diſ- courſe relates to words and not to actions. The ſame exactneſs and propriety of ſpeech are preſerved alſo in St. Mark, (Mark III. 28, 29.) " All ſins ſhall be forgiven unto the ſons of men, and blaſphemies " wherewithſoever they ſhall blaſpheme, but he that ſhall blaſpheme " againſt the Holy Ghoſt hath never forgiveneſs." And it is to be wiſhed

wiſhed that Chriſtians had confined themſelves to ſpeak after the manner of Chriſt; they could not poſſibly then have erred ſo widely in their definitions of the nature of the particular crime here cenſured, nor have reckoned it to conſiſt in obſtinate reſiſtance of the truth, or in wilful ſin after baptiſm, or in final impenitency or the like, which are ſins but are not blaſphemies. The *ſin* againſt the Holy Ghoſt is a more looſe and general expreſſion, the *blaſphemy* againſt the Holy Ghoſt is more ſpecial and particular; for though all blaſphemies are ſins, yet all ſins are not blaſphemies.

2. We ſee wherein the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt doth conſiſt, namely in ſaying that Jeſus did caſt out devils by the prince by the devils. Nor let any one be moved (as ſome ſerious perſons I know have been moved) from thinking this the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, becauſe it is ſaid in St. John (VII. 49.) that "the "Holy Ghoſt was not yet given;" for though the Holy Ghoſt was not yet given openly and publicly to the diſciples as on the day of Pentecoſt, yet Jeſus had *the Spirit without meaſure*. (John III. 34.) "God giveth not the Spirit by meaſure unto him;" He was "anointed with the Holy Ghoſt and with power," as St. Peter ſpeaketh; (Acts X. 38.) and in this very ſtory he ſaith himſelf, "If "I caſt out devils by the Spirit of God then the kingdom of God "is come unto you"—plainly enough implying that he did caſt out devils by the Spirit of God. And the Phariſees ſaying that he caſt out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils, expreſly aſſerting theſe works of the Holy Ghoſt to be the works of the devil was the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt; as manifeſtly appears from the whole context, and particularly from the preceding inference in St. Matthew, "Wherefore I ſay unto you," and from the ſubſequent reaſon in St. Mark, "Becauſe they ſaid he hath an unclean ſpirit," becauſe they ſaid he caſteth out devils by combination with the prince of the devils: And neither would the inference in St. Matthew, nor the reaſon in St. Mark be in the leaſt proper or pertinent, if this very blaſphemy was not the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt.

3. "All

3. " All manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall be forgiven but the blaſ-
" phemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt ſhall not be forgiven"—We have thus interpreted—All manner of ſin and blaſphemy ſhall *more eaſily* be forgiven than the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt. For beſides what hath been already ſaid, it ſeemeth very harſh to declare any ſin to be abſolutely incapable of forgiveneſs, and it is uſual in Scripture language to ſpeak of difficulties as impoſſibilities, of things which ſhall hardly be as things which ſhall not be. " It is eaſier for a camel to go
" through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the
" kingdom of God," (Matt. XIX. 24.) All agree ſignifies, It is *very hard* for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God: And in the 6th Chapter to the Hebrews " It is impoſſible to renew them
" again unto repentance" ſignifies It is *extremely difficult* to renew them again unto repentance: And why may not the phraſe of the text *It ſhall not be forgiven* as well ſignify *It ſhall more hardly be forgiven?* eſpecially ſince the other phraſe *It ſhall be forgiven* can only ſignify *It ſhall more eaſily be forgiven.*

4. The blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt will more hardly be forgiven than the blaſphemy againſt the Son of man or any other ſin and blaſphemy, becauſe it is a crime of a fouler nature than the blaſphemy againſt the Son of man or any other ſin and blaſphemy. For the blaſphemy againſt the Son of man was only a perſonal reflection upon Jeſus, but the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt was not only a perſonal reflection upon Jeſus, but was alſo a reflection upon the divine power by which he caſt out devils. The former the Jews might be led into through miſtake and the prejudices of education, but the latter muſt be the effect of malice, prepenſe malice; and was a worſe ſin than any other, becauſe it was ſinning againſt greater light, rejecting the laſt means of grace, reſiſting the utmoſt power of conviction, what they themſelves ſaw, and what one would think they themſelves could not but know to be wrought by the Spirit of God. Some other miracles the devils might be ſuppoſed to work, but how abſurd was it to imagin, that Satan would ever caſt out Satan? and what more certain indication could there be of a perverſe

perverſe obſtinate temper of mind, more hardly to be reclaimed than any other, and than any other therefore more hardly to be forgiven.

5. The blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt being thus defined, we can have no reaſon to deſpair upon an apprehenſion that we have committed this hainous ſin; for it is hardly poſſible for any Chriſtian, and much leſs for any Chriſtian now adays, to be guilty of it. They only are guilty of the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, who ſeeing Jeſus caſt out devils yet ſay he doeth it by the power of the devils, as did the phariſees. This is the particular caſe to which our Saviour applies it in the goſpel; and it would be the moſt uncharitable thing in the world to extend it farther, to charge it upon any other crime or any other perſons without warrant of ſcripture. But the apoſtles in all their preaching and in all their epiſtles mention nothing of the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt; and they would hardly have failed to caution us againſt it if it was probable, or indeed poſſible, for Chriſtians to fall into it.

But 6thly and laſtly that we may be the ſurer not to fall into it, let us take care never to make any approach towards it; ſuch is obſtinately withſtanding the truth, which is in effect withſtanding him who is the Spirit of truth; ſuch is reſiſting the good motions of the Holy Ghoſt and doing deſpite unto the Spirit of grace; ſuch is profane ſcoffing at the ſcriptures which are the words of the Holy Ghoſt; ſuch is ridiculing the miracles wrought in confirmation of Chriſtianity, which are the works of the Holy Ghoſt, as hath been done particularly by a late (1) Author with as little learning and good reaſoning as decency and good manners; finally ſuch is apoſtaſy from the Chriſtian faith, of which the ſcripture ſpeaketh in almoſt as ſevere terms as of the blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt itſelf.

And from theſe and from all other deadly ſin God of his infinite mercy deliver us all.

(1) Woolſton.

DISSERTATION XVII.

On the Parable of the TARES.

NOTHING ſhoweth greater art and addreſs in a ſpeaker than adapting his diſcourſe to the taſte and genius of his hearers. The taſte and genius of the Jews, as well as of all the eaſtern nations, was very much for ſtrong figurative diſcourſes, allegories and parables. Our Saviour therefore, in conformity to the ſtile and manner of his country delivered many of his doctrins in parables, (Matt. XIII. 24.) " and " without a parable ſpake he not unto them."

It is certain that a parable hath a better effect and maketh more impreſſion upon mens minds than a plain dry diſcourſe without any figures to raiſe and inliven it. Not that our Saviour delivers all his doctrin in parables, but only when it was proper for illuſtration or for ſome other reaſon, or perhaps when it was not ſafe for him to ſpeak more plainly. In the XIIIth chapter of St. Matthew we have ſeveral parables together, but the ſubject of the diſcourſe ſeemeth to require them. Our Saviour is ſpeaking before a mixt audience of his diſciples and the multitude about the ſtate and condition of his Church, the revolutions and ſucceſs of his kingdom. For ſeveral reaſons it might not be proper to venture theſe truths abroad naked and unveiled: and very prudently therefore he cloathed his diſcourſe in parables, that they who had ears to hear might hear, and they might be blinded who would not ſee. But if there was any thing ſaid in public, which the diſciples did not underſtand, that he explained to them afterwards in private; and theſe explanations are left upon record for our uſe, as well as the parables themſelves.

It is another beauty too of our Saviour's parables, that they are ſo natural and eaſy; none of his images are ſtrained or out of the way; they

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are commonly ſuch as the preſent ſcene and preſent objects ſuggeſted to his imagination. When this diſcourſe was held in this chapter, the time was ſeed-time, the ſcene was the ſea ſhore, our Saviour ſitting in a ſhip, and the multitude ſtanding on the land. And now if you pleaſe to obſerve, you will find moſt of the parables taken either from the ſeaſon of the year or from objects which were then in view. The ſeaſon of the year manifeſtly gave occaſion to the parables of the "ſower "who went forth to ſow," and of the man "ſowing good ſeed in "his field and tares ſpringing up afterwards:" the fields which lay on one ſide might furniſh hints for the parables of the "treaſure hid in "a field," and of the "muſtard ſeed grown into a tree:" as the ſea that lay on the other ſide naturally ſuggeſted the parables of the "mer-"chantman ſeeking goodly pearls," and of the "net that was caſt "into the ſea and gathered of every kind."

Each of theſe parables deſerves a diſtinct conſideration by itſelf; but perhaps there is not any one of them that will furniſh us with more uſeful reflections than *the parable of the tares.* It ſeemeth the diſciples themſelves did not at firſt rightly underſtand it; and therefore they apply to our Lord, that he would explain it unto them, "Declare "unto us the parable of the tares of the field." He graciouſly condeſcends to their requeſt, ſo that we have here indeed an infallible expounder of ſcripture; and adhering to his interpretation we cannot be miſtaken in it. It is not my deſign to inſiſt upon all thoſe obſervations, which may fairly be deduced from this parable; but only upon ſuch as neceſſarily ſpring out of the words, and offer themſelves to our conſideration in the very reading.

1. The main ſcope of the parable ſhoweth, that in the world there is a mixture of bad men and good, in this great field "the tares "and the wheat grow up together." Not that any men are perfect in virtue or vice, or without a mixture of good and bad qualities, like gold and droſs, blended together. None ſo vicious, ſo depraved as to be deſtitute of all good qualities; none ſo virtuous, ſo perfect as to be free from frailties and infirmities. He muſt be more than an angel who can be completely good, and He muſt be worſe

than a devil who can be completely wicked. It is very true, as our bleſſed Saviour hath determined, (Matt. XIX. 17.) that " there is none " good," abſolutely and completely good, " but one, that is God." Men and all other creatures partake of perfections and imperfections. They who poſſeſs moſt good qualities, they whoſe general conduct is virtue; theſe we eſteem good men, theſe are the *wheat*, the *children of the kingdom*. They who poſſeſs moſt ill qualities, they whoſe general behaviour is vice; thoſe we reckon bad men, thoſe are the *tares*, *the children of the wicked one*. And they are wiſely ſuffered by providence to grow up together, to diverſify the ſcene, and give a various color to life.

Evil is permitted in the moral world, as well as in the natural; and in both much for the ſame reaſons, to ſhow the power, the juſtice, and even the goodneſs of God, for the trial of ſome, for the puniſhment of others, and for the uſe and diſciplin of all. Wicked men are often raiſed up for the ſame reaſon as was Pharaoh, for hear what God ſaith unto him, (Rom. IX. 17.) " Even for this ſame purpoſe have " I raiſed thee up, that I might ſhow my power in thee, and that my " name might be declared throughout all the earth." Wicked men are what one of them (I think Attila) ſaid of himſelf, *ſcourges* in the hand of providence, and the propereſt inſtruments to execute the divine vengeance one upon another. And ſuch is the goodneſs of almighty God, that he can bring even good out of evil. (Pſalm LXXVI. 10.) " Surely the wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee," O God, " the remainder " of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain." Good men and bad, all in their ſeveral places and ſtations, conſpire to anſwer the ends and accompliſh the deſigns of providence, as in a well wrought drama there is diverſity of characters, and every character contributes to the action, every part is made ſubſervient to bring about the cataſtrophe of the whole.

Whatever might have been intended at firſt, it is certainly not the ſcheme now, that this earth ſhould be the place of our abode for ever. (Heb. XIII. 14.) " For here we have no continuing city, but we ſeek " one to come." The preſent ſcene therefore is fitly chequered with good and evil, that we may not ſet our affections too much on the tranſitory

ſitory pleaſures of this world, but may aſpire after that heavenly country, where is (Pſal. XVI. 11.) " fulneſs of joy and pleaſures for ever-" more." This life is evidently deſigned for a ſtate of trial and probation; and if there were not ſo much vice and wickedneſs in the world, neither would there be ſo many trials of virtue, ſo many occaſions of goodneſs. The inſtances of the former ſort make thoſe of the latter appear brighter and more beautiful, as diamonds receive a luſtre from their foil. Where would have been the faith and patience of the Saints, the lives of Confeſſors and deaths of Martyrs, if there had not been men as wicked as they were good to call them to that fiery trial, in fact inſtruments of the devil's malice, but in event inſtruments of God's glory? Nay the paſſion of the bleſſed Jeſus could not have been accompliſhed, or at leaſt not accompliſhed in that manner, if there had not been a falſe apoſtle to betray him, the chief prieſts to accuſe him, a corrupt judge to condemn him, and an incenſed rabble to crucify him. The wickedneſs of ſome therefore is wiſely permitted for the trial and probation of others; and out of this diſcord in the world ariſeth the harmony of providence.

But though God bringeth ſo much good even out of moral evil, yet we muſt not imagin that God is ever the author of this evil. For as he himſelf is infinitely holy and juſt and good, ſo he made all his creatures holy and juſt and good: but moral agents muſt be left to their own liberty, otherwiſe they are not properly *moral* agents; and this liberty they may abuſe, and ſome of them angels and men have abuſed, to purpoſes which their Creator never intended. (James I. 13, 14.) " Let " no man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God " cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: but " every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own luſt and " enticed." *God ſoweth* only *the good ſeed*; it is *an enemy, who ſoweth the tares.*

2. It deſerves our notice that theſe tares were ſown, while men were aſleep. (ver. 25.) " While men ſlept, the enemy came and ſowed tares " among the wheat and went his way." And ſuch commonly are the effects of ſupineneſs and idleneſs! Errors and vices ſpring up in the mind,

mind (1), like weeds in a field neglected; and unleſs due care and culture be applied, will ſoon overrun it. Idleneſs begets ignorance, and ignorance begets error: and accordingly we may obſerve that the greateſt hereſies have ſtolen into the Church, not in times of light and knowlege, but in the hour of ignorance and the "powerof darkneſs." When the empire became Chriſtian, and Chriſtians were no longer expoſed to perſecution, but lived at eaſe and in pleaſure; then the primitive diſciplin of the Church relaxed, then men grew more careleſs about ſpiritual affairs and more buſied about ſecular, then the tares ſprang up with the wheat, and Arianiſm and other hereſies abounded more, than ever they had done from the firſt preaching of the goſpel. The Romiſh ſuperſtitions alſo crept into the Church in the moſt dark and illiterate ages ſince the coming of Chriſt, when the ſpirit of ignorance brooded upon the face of the earth, when the world was aſleep to every thing that was virtuous and praiſe-worthy, and awake only to war and wickedneſs; and the ſame ignorance and authority which eſtabliſhed them at firſt, ſtill ſupport and keep them from falling. In like manner when that cunning impoſtor Mohammed ſet up his pretenſions, his countrymen the Arabians were ſunk in the loweſt ignorance and indifference to all religion, and the Chriſtians of the eaſt were infected with various hereſies, and ſo divided among themſelves, that they became an eaſy prey to their common enemy.

As errors ſpring up in the underſtandings of men, while they are remiſs and negligent; ſo likewiſe evil affections gain ground upon their morals and corrupt their practice. Where men are in the greateſt ſecurity, there commonly they are in the greateſt danger. While Sampſon lieth ſleeping, he is ſpoiled of his hair, and robbed of his ſtrength. The tempter is awake, while we are aſleep; and then planteth thoſe habits, which commonly grow up with time, and are ſeldom rooted out ever afterwards. Indeed the beſt Chriſtians are not always upon their guard; they are ſometimes apt to remit their vigilancy and care: but there are ſome men like the ſluggard in the proverbs; (Prov. VI. 10.) they

(1) Neglectis urenda filix innaſcitur agris. Hor.

(2) Ut jugulent hominem ſurgunt de nocte latrones, Ut

they are "yet for a little ſleep, a little ſlumber, a little folding of "the hands to ſleep;" and never conſider that idleneſs is not only a great vice in itſelf, but the inlet of almoſt all others. The idle even ſollicit, provoke, anticipate temptation, and ſtand gaping, as it were, for ruin, as the thirſty earth gapeth for rain. (2) When thieves riſe in the night for deſtruction, will not you awake for your own preſervation? But if you will not awake and apply your mind to your ſtudies and to things honeſt; you will be tormented with love or envy or ſome other paſſion, that you cannot ſleep. Such were the ſentiments even of a heathen poet; and certainly watchfulneſs, if it be not one of the greateſt virtues, is yet the guard and ſupport of them all. The ſcripture therefore very frequently recommends and injoins *watchfulneſs*; "and what I ſay unto you," ſaith our Saviour to his diſciples, (Mark XIII. 37.) "I ſay unto all "Watch." (1 Pet. V. 8.) "Be therefore ſober, be vigilant, be- "cauſe your adverſary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about "ſeeking whom he may devour." (Luke XII. 37.) "Bleſſed are "thoſe ſervants whom the Lord when he cometh ſhall find watch- "ing."

3. It is implied in theſe words, (ver. 27.) "So the ſervants of the "houſholder came and ſaid unto him Sir didſt not thou ſow good "ſeed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?" It is implied, I ſay, in theſe words, that men are apt to be ſtartled and alarmed at the growth and increaſe of wickedneſs in the world: and indeed it may ſeem ſtrange that the Chriſtian religion ſhould have no better influence and effect, that men's lives ſhould be ſo contrary to their profeſſions, and their principles and their practices ſo ill agree together. Who that readeth the precepts of Chriſtianity and the life of its founder, the motives and aſſiſtances offered in the goſpel, the rewards promiſed to obedience and the puniſhments threatened to diſobedience, who that only readeth theſe things would not immediately conclude that this world muſt needs be a pa-

(2) Ut teipſum ſerves non expergiſceris? atqui ——————ſi non
Intendes animum ſtudiis & rebus honeſtis,
Invidia vel amore vigil torquebere. Hor.

radiſe,

radiſe, and there can be nothing but "peace on earth," and harmony and "good will among men?" But then if he looketh into the world itſelf, how different will he find it in fact, from what he fancied it in ſpeculation? and inſtead of a paradiſe, would he not ſee rather a Babel, ſcene of diſſenſion and confuſion?

This may be matter of ſurpriſe indeed to any one; but ſome men have carried it farther, and have made the wickedneſs of Chriſtians an argument againſt the truth of Chriſtianity itſelf. But if the wickedneſs of men is any objection to Chriſtianity, it is equally an objection to natural religion as well as revealed, to reaſon as well as ſcripture; for neither do men live agreeably to the one any more than to the other. Nay it is as much an argument againſt all laws and all government, for no laws no government can force entire obedience. We ſhould conſider, that the precepts of the goſpel are but precepts ſtill; though they are powerful, yet they are not irreſiſtible; they are to direct, they are to perſuade us if we will, but they are not to conſtrain, they are not to neceſſitate our obedience whether we will or not: and indeed if it was otherwiſe, obedience would be mere mechaniſm, morality would ceaſe to be morality, and religion would no longer be religion. Though the Chriſtian religion hath no better effect at preſent, yet it was not ſo from the beginning. There was a time, when the lives of Chriſtians were agreeable to their holy profeſſion, and reflected honor back again on Chriſtianity: and if the caſe is not the ſame now as it was then, it muſt be charged altogether upon the degeneracy of men, and not upon any defect in the doctrins of God. The means of grace are ſtill the ſame, and if they do not attain the ſame ends, what but the difference of men can make this difference of effects, and whom have we to blame but ourſelves?

There is therefore no juſt reaſon to object the vices of Chriſtians to Chriſtianity itſelf; and indeed they are Chriſtians only in name and not in reality, who profeſs Chriſt with their lips and diſhonor him in their lives; and though they may cry unto him "Lord, Lord," yet he will never own them for his, (Matt. VII. 23.) "I never knew you, "depart from me ye that work iniquity." The purity and perfection of the

the Chriſtian morality prove evidently that it is a religion worthy of God; the wickedneſs and degeneracy of Chriſtians only prove the perverſeneſs of human nature, which the beſt laws are not ſufficient to reſtrain. And if the world is ſo corrupt even with Chriſtianity, how much worſe would it have been in all probability without it?

It is to be hoped even now that the Chriſtian religion hath the due influence and effect upon the lives and natures of many; and that more ſuch inſtances do not abound, is not the fault of the doctrin but of men. And we have the leſs reaſon to be ſurpriſed at it, as it is declared in this parable, as well as in other places of ſcripture, that thus it ſhould be. If wicked men will not obey the precepts, they will yet fulfil the prophecies of the goſpel; and one way or other anſwer the ends of divine providence. Only let us take care not to be of their number, and anſwer the ends of providence in the nobleſt way. And ſince our adverſaries are ſo forward to impute the faults of Chriſtians to Chriſtianity itſelf, and ſo to wound religion through the ſides of its profeſſors, let us diſarm their malice of all ſuch objections by "walking worthy of the vocation where-"with we are called," (Eph. IV. 1.) and "adorning the doctrin "of God our Saviour in all things;" (Tit. II. 10.) that ſo they who ſeek occaſion againſt us may be ſo far from finding occaſion, that "whereas now they ſpeak againſt us as evil doers," (1 Pet. II. 12.) "they may by our good works which they ſhall behold glorify "God in the day of viſitation."

4. It may be farther obſerved from this parable, and a material obſervation it is, that God hath made no proviſion for the rooting of all heretics and offenders out of his Church. The nature of man, that is apt to be ſharpened againſt all who think and act in a different manner from himſelf, is eager to put projects of this kind in execution; but there is no warrant or authority for them from God. The pretence is plauſible indeed, to reduce men to unity, to purge all hereſy, to baniſh all vice; and certainly it would be happy and glorious, if theſe things could be accompliſhed: but generally your great reformers want moſt to be reformed themſelves; a real refor-

mation, there are few who intend it wiſely or charitably purſue it. The ſervants of the houſholder, no doubt, had very good intentions, when they complained of the tares and ſaid unto him, (ver. 28.) "Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up." But what anſwer doth the maſter return? (ver. 30.) "Nay, let both grow to-"gether until the harveſt."

Not that this interferes at all with the ſanguinary laws of ſtates and communities, or prohibits the execution of capital offenders; for this is ſpoken of men rather in their ſpiritual capacity as Chriſtians and members of the Church, than in their civil capacity as men and members of the commonwealth. The Chriſtian religion is not ſuch an enemy to civil ſociety as to render unlawful the neceſſary means of its preſervation; and expreſly aſſerts, (Rom. XIII. 4.) that the civil magiſtrate "beareth not the ſword in vain," that he "is a revenger to "execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." Neither doth this preclude all eccleſiaſtical cenſures in caſes where the crimes are flagrant and notorious; for we ſee death inflicted on Ananias and Sapphira for their ſacrilege, and others (1 Tim. I. 20. 1 Cor. V. 5.) "delivered "unto Satan for the deſtruction of the fleſh, that the ſpirit may be "ſaved in the day of the Lord Jeſus." But I think it may teach us, not to exerciſe theſe cenſures lightly, not to thunder out excommunications and anathema's upon every occaſion, the frequency of which is not found at all to raiſe their authority, but rather to leſſen their reverence, and to make them no more regarded than *bruta fulmina* indeed. And uſually this mighty zeal is more for the *vain traditions* of *men*, than for the *doctrins* and *commandments* of *God*.

The reaſon here employed for not rooting up the tares is (ver. 29.) "leſt while ye gather up the tares, ye root up alſo the wheat with "them." It is not eaſy in all caſes to diſtinguiſh truth from falſhood, right from wrong. What is hereſy in the opinion of men may be orthodoxy in the ſight of God; and there is no great reaſon to fear that what men ſhall thus "bind on earth" will be "bound in heaven." Men cannot ſound the hearts and intentions of men. For the faults of ſome of a different ſect and profeſſion they are apt to cenſure and condemn all

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the reſt; they judge by appearances and think all alike; as in a field where yellow flowers grow up among the corn, the whole appears yellow. But in the worſt religion, it is to be hoped, there are ſome good men; and there are ſome bad, it is to be feared, in the beſt; even among the Apoſtles there was a Judas. The prophet Elijah imagined that he alone was left a worſhipper of the God of Iſrael; (Rom. XI. 4.) " but what ſaith the anſwer of God unto him, I have reſerved to " myſelf ſeven thouſand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal." And ſo perhaps at this preſent time alſo, the world may be better than godly jealouſy may think it.

We may very well therefore root up the *wheat* with the *tares*, ſince we cannot diſtinguiſh rightly the one from the other: and the roots of both, their concerns and intereſts are ſo blended and interwoven, that there cannot be a general judgment without involving the good as well as the bad, nor even a particular judgment upon the bad without affecting the good in ſome degree or other. " Let both" therefore " grow " together until the harveſt;" and they who are zealous for reformation, let them begin in the right place, let them begin at home and firſt reform themſelves. This certainly is in our power, and though there will ſtill be tares in the world, yet every man may make at leaſt *one leſs* if he pleaſes.

But 5. and laſtly, though the tares for ſeveral wiſe reaſons are ſuffered to grow up among the wheat, yet there is a time coming when there will be made a diſcrimination, and the righteous and wicked will be diſtinguiſhed as much one from another by their rewards and puniſhments, as they are already by their lives and actions. God the moſt juſt governor and righteous judge of the world muſt ſhow his approbation of virtue and diſapprobation of vice one time or other; but this it is evident that he doth not always do in the preſent ſcene of things; and therefore we may be certain that he will and muſt do it hereafter, as certain as we are of his moral attributes, as certain as of his providence and being itſelf. (ver. 30.) " Let both grow together until the har- " veſt, and in the time of harveſt I will ſay to the reapers Gather ye " together firſt the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them, but

" gather the wheat into my barn." The time of *harveſt* is expreſly defined (ver. 39.) to be the " end of the world:" And it is in vain therefore for us to expect the particular interpoſition of God to alter the courſe of nature in our favor, to ſpare all the righteous and cut off all the wicked, as he once paſſed over the Iſraelites and ſmote the Egyptians. It may ſatisfy us, that at the end of the world, the wheat will be winnowed from the chaff, and the ſeparation that is then made will be made for ever.

In the mean time we ſhould not be too haſty to judge others, but leave them to the righteous judgment of God. (1 Cor. IV. 5.) " Judge " nothing before the time until the Lord come, who both will bring " to light the hidden things of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the " counſels of the hearts; and then ſhall every man have praiſe of God." And if we ſhould not be too haſty in judging of others, much leſs ſhould we preſume to cenſure the myſterious proceedings of providence, or repine at any of the divine diſpenſations which we cannot account for and underſtand. With this we may reſt ſatisfied, that if any thing appears crooked now, it will be rectified then. The ſcheme of God's government, that now in many inſtances ſeemeth ſo perplexed and intricate, will then all be unraveled and unfolded; and the reaſonableneſs and equity of all his tranſactions will be manifeſted in the ſight of men and angels. The diſtribution will be made with the greateſt impartiality and juſtice: and if we would have our lot and portion among the righteous then, we muſt be of that number now, (Tit. II. 12, 13.) " and live ſoberly righteouſly and godly in this preſent world, looking " for that bleſſed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and " our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt." Nothing but a good life can ſecure a bleſſed immortality. For there is no reſpect of perſons with God; the virtues and vices of men only make the difference between them in their final ſtate and condition. (ver. 40, &c.) " As the tares are gathered " and burnt in the fire, ſo ſhall it be in the end of this world: The " Son of man ſhall ſend forth his angels, and they ſhall gather out " of his kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity,

" and

" and ſhall caſt them into a furnace of fire, there ſhall be wailing " and gnaſhing of teeth: Then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth as " the ſun in the kingdom of the Father. Who hath ears to hear, " let him hear."

DISSERTATION XVIII.

On HERESIES and SCHISMS.

THE Chriſtian religion hath met with the fate of its divine Author, to be betrayed by ſome of its own diſciples and followers, and hath not ſuffered more from all its enemies without, than from hereſies and diviſions within. Hereſies and ſchiſms have continually been the great diſturbers of the peace of Chriſtendom. Every age, every country, every rank and order of men have been infected by them. They ſprung up together with the Church, and have continued to grow and floriſh with it; and from a view of our own times we have no reaſon to think they will ever fail or decay. We read of a Cerinthus and a Simon Magus in the days of the apoſtles; and if the ſtream was corrupted at the fountain-head, it is no wonder it ſhould ſtill gather more filth having rolled down through ſo many ages and countries. There is no article of our faith, that hath not ſomewhere or other been queſtioned, denied, derided; there are no tenets ſo monſtrous and abſurd, which have not ſomewhere or other been advanced, profeſſed, maintained: and leſt matter ſhould be wanting for controverſy, old objections have been revived, and hereſies which have been hiſſed off the ſtage at one time, have again made their appearance with applauſe in another. In ſhort, Whoever ſhall look into the hiſtory of the Church, will

will find creeds againſt creeds, fathers againſt fathers, councils againſt councils, the Church of one age and country againſt the Church of another age and country: and almoſt all the contending parties have aſſerted their opinions with equal zeal equal obſtinacy, haſtily concluding themſelves only to be right, and thundring out their anathemas againſt all others.

This then being the ſtate of the Church, doth not ſuch a ſtate (will ſome men perhaps ſay) ſeem to reflect upon the providence of God, and call in queſtion the truth of the Chriſtian religion? Is ſuch a diſpenſation of things worthy of infinite wiſdom and infinite power? Would infinite wiſdom deliver doctrins in ſuch a manner as to be liable to diſpute? Would infinite power ſuffer them to be diſputed? Would it not have been more for the glory of God, more for the good of the Church, had men been all of one mind and one faith? And ſince men are of ſo many and various, ſo different and contradictory perſuaſions, is it not a ſtrong preſumption, that either there is no truth no certainty in religion at all, or that they have not any ſufficient means of arriving at the knowlege of it?

Thus may ſome men vainly argue within themſelves, but our Saviour was of another opinion. He was ſo far from thinking hereſies and ſchiſms any impeachment of the divine providence, or any prejudice to the truth of his religion, that he maketh them rather an argument both for the one and the other: and declares that offenſes muſt neceſſarily be, but at the ſame time denounceth a ſevere woe againſt the authors of them. (Matt. XVIII. 7.) "It muſt "needs be that offenſes come, but woe to that man by whom the "offenſe cometh." Or as the words are recorded by St. Luke, (XVII. 1.) "It is impoſſible but that offenſes will come, but woe "unto him through whom they come." Not that this was any *natural neceſſity* or *natural impoſſibility*, for then God muſt be the author of evil; but only morally ſpeaking, and conſidering the freedom and frailty of human nature, the weakneſs of ſome and the perverſeneſs of others, it was in a manner *unavoidable* and *impoſſible* but

but that offenſes would come, though at the ſame time it was very unreaſonable that they ſhould come.

The words are general, but may relate to hereſies and ſchiſms in particular, which are the great ſcandals and offenſes in the Church: and from hence therefore I ſhall take occaſion to ſhow 1ſt the unavoidableneſs and uſe of hereſies and ſchiſms in the Church; "It "muſt needs be that offenſes come:" And 2dly the great ſin of them, which deſerves this woe to be denounced againſt them; "Woe unto that man by whom the offenſe cometh."

I. Then I am to ſhow that hereſies and ſchiſms muſt unavoidably be; but yet by the good providence of God are made ſubſervient to ſeveral uſeful ends and purpoſes.

1. Hereſies and ſchiſms muſt *needs be*, becauſe it was foretold by Chriſt and his Apoſtles that they ſhould be: Or you may turn it otherwiſe, it was foretold that they ſhould be, becauſe it was foreſeen that they would be. Beſides our Saviour's aſſertions, St. Paul writeth to Timothy, (1 Tim. IV. 1.) "Now the Spirit ſpeaketh "expreſly, that in the latter times ſome ſhall depart from the faith, "giving heed to ſeducing ſpirits and doctrins of devils." "There "muſt be hereſies among you," ſaith St. Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor. XI. 19): and addreſſing himſelf to the elders of the Church at Miletus he ſaith (Acts XX. 30.) "Of your own ſelves ſhall men ariſe, "ſpeaking perverſe things to draw diſciples after them." Very full and expreſs is the prediction of St. Peter to this purpoſe (2 Pet. II. 1, 2.) "There were falſe prophets among the people, even as there ſhall be "falſe teachers among you, who privily ſhall bring in damnable here"ſies, even denying the Lord that bought them—And many ſhall fol"low their pernicious ways, by reaſon of whom the way of truth ſhall "be evil ſpoken of." Several other paſſages there are in holy writ, which forewarn us of theſe things; and the whole Epiſtle of St. Jude is particularly leveled againſt hereſies and heretics, men who were of "old ordained to this condemnation." Let us not therefore, be ſurpriſed or murmur, for as our bleſſed Lord himſelf ſpeaketh on this very occaſion, (Matt. XXIV. 25.) "Behold I have told you before."

2. Here-

2. Hereſies and ſchiſms muſt needs be, if we conſider the nature of man, and the nature of the Chriſtian inſtitution. The Chriſtian religion holdeth forth many ſublime and inconceivable myſteries; and theſe, to be ſure, would never be digeſted by the pride and vanity of ſome, and the vice and ſenſuality of others. The doctrin of Jeſus too is, for many wiſe reaſons, delivered down to us in writing; but then it is ſubject to thoſe inconveniences, to which all things in writing are ſubject, of being variouſly interpreted, and having falſe gloſſes put upon it. What is thus liable to be miſunderſtood, men are apt enough to miſunderſtand, (2 Tim. III. 13, 7.) " deceiving, and being deceived, " ever learning, and never able to come to the knowlege of the truth." In a word, as long as ſin and error are in the world, ſo long there muſt be ſchiſm and hereſy: and mankind may expect an entire exemption from the former, as ſoon as from the latter.

3. This ſuggeſts to us another reaſon upon this head. For ſince the nature of man and of the Chriſtian inſtitution is ſuch, that it is impoſſible but offenſes will come; they could not have been prevented, had not God miraculouſly interpoſed: and had God miraculouſly interpoſed, it would have deſtroyed the very end of religion. For men are not to be compelled and over-ruled into an opinion, but muſt be won by rational evidence and the gentle methods of argument and perſuaſion. Religion muſt be a matter of choice, not of force and neceſſity; and that faith, which is conſtrained, is no faith, that obedience, which is involuntary, hath the nature of diſobedience.

4. As it was not fitting that hereſies and ſchiſms ſhould be totally prevented, ſo they are wiſely permitted for the trial of mens faith, to diſtinguiſh the true believer from the falſe, the ſound from the unſound. When St. Paul informs the Corinthians that " there muſt be hereſies " among them," He giveth this reaſon for them, " That they which " are approved may be made manifeſt." They are the touchſtone to try the faith and opinions of men. It is to be feared, moſt men never examin the grounds and principles of their religion, but are blindly led by education and cuſtom, by paſſion and prejudice, by intereſt and authority. It is to be hoped, that ſome there are, who dare to think for

for themſelves, who purſue truth for truth's ſake, and (1 Theſſ. V. 21.) " prove all things and hold faſt that which is good." Now the beſt means of diſcovering the ſteddineſs and ingenuity of theſe, and the weakneſs and inſincerity of thoſe are hereſies and ſchiſms: as when a rebel erects his ſtandard, he ſoon engageth and draweth over the malecontents to his party, and giveth the true friends of the government an opportunity of exerting thoſe virtues, which would lie hid in times of peace and tranquillity.

5. Hereſies and ſchiſms help us to diſcern more clearly the ſignal providence of God in guarding and protecting his Church. For the more any thing is oppoſed, and the greater danger it incurs, the more is the divine providence illuſtrated and diſplayed in its preſervation. It is rightly obſerved, (Matt. XII. 25.) that " a kingdom " divided againſt itſelf is ſoon brought to deſolation;" but notwithſtanding the many diviſions and hereſies of Chriſtians, the Church hath hitherto ſubſiſted and will ſubſiſt, and " the gates of hell" have never, ſhall never " prevail againſt her." And what reaſon can we poſſibly aſſign for this, but the guardian care, and overruling inſpection of heaven, that will (Heb. XIII. 5.) " never leave " her nor forſake her?"

6. Hereſies and diviſions in the Church have been the means of preſerving the books of holy writ incorrupt and entire. For had all men eſpouſed the ſame opinions, they might, eaſily and without oppoſition, have adapted the ſcripture to thoſe opinions, by lopping off the texts, which ſeemed to diſcountenance and contradict them, and by ingrafting others to ſupport and confirm them. But now the ſeveral ſects and parties of Chriſtians having a jealous watchful eye one over another (not only the orthodox being a guard, as it were, ſet over the heretics, and the heretics over the orthodox; but likewiſe heretics themſelves oppoſing heretics) have rendered it wholly impracticable to ſuppreſs any thing on the one ſide, or to add on the other. And wherever any thing of this nature hath been attempted (as in the Church which pretends moſt to unity of faith and deciſion of controverſies things of this nature have been at-

tempted) the fraud hath been ſoon detected by men of a contrary perſuaſion, and hath met with the reproach and contempt, which it juſtly deſerves. This, doubtleſs, is one principal reaſon why the books of the Old and New Teſtament have ſuffered leſs alteration, and have fewer various readings in them than any other book of that antiquity.

7. As hereſies and ſchiſms contribute to the keeping of the ſacred oracles in their original purity, ſo they occaſion them to be more ſtudied, and cauſe the articles of our faith to be better underſtood. All parties derive, or profeſs to derive, their tenets from the ſcriptures; to theſe they finally appeal, and by theſe they muſt be tried. Now this of neceſſity putteth men upon peruſing and ſtudying theſe books, upon conſidering the controverted texts, and ſearching into their force and meaning, their connexion with what goeth before and what follows after, to ſee whether they will bear the weight that is laid on them, whether they will prove the things which they are alleged to prove. And nothing was ever ſo wittily ever ſo plauſibly written againſt our faith, but it occaſioned a more excellent apology to be written for it: for no ſort of arguments can be uſed in favor of falſhood, but ſtill ſtronger and better will be urged on the ſide of truth. And as in no age the articles of our faith have been more daringly attacked, the myſteries of our religion more inſolently derided, than in this and the laſt; ſo in none have been produced more accurate, more rational, more convincing treatiſes in defenſe of them.

II. For theſe reaſons, I conceive, hereſies and ſchiſms have their uſe; as the rankeſt poiſons in ſome caſes prove the beſt medicines. I proceed now under my 2d general head to ſhow the great ſin of them which is ſo ſeverely threatned by our Saviour. "Woe to that man by whom "the offenſe cometh."

Hereſy and *ſchiſm* are words which will admit of a good ſenſe as well as a bad one, though moſt commonly they are taken in a bad acceptation. That is ſometimes called *hereſy*, which is not really ſo, as St. Paul ſaith (Acts XXIV. 14.) "After the way which they call he-"reſy, ſo worſhip I the God of my fathers." Neither is every *ſchiſm*

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of bad import and ſignification. A ſeparation from a moſt corrupt and idolatrous church is ſo far from being a criminal, that it is a commendable *ſchiſm*. *Hereſy* in the criminal ſenſe of the word I take to conſiſt in profeſſing ſuch doctrins as tend to impiety, or ſuch as directly or by plain conſequence contradict ſome neceſſary and fundamental article of the Creed. *Schiſm* I conceive to be a needleſs and a cauſeleſs ſeparation from the eſtabliſhed church and religion, and diſobedience to lawful authority without any ſufficient ground or warrant from Scripture. And what words can ſufficiently exaggerate the hainouſneſs of ſuch a complicated crime? what colors can paint its deformity? Is it not perverting the laws of God, and oppoſing human authority to divine? Is it not in ſome meaſure fruſtrating and defeating the deſign of our bleſſed Saviour's coming into the world? idolizing our own opinions? diſobeying lawful government? and ſubſtituting the vain nations of men for the ſacred truths of God?

But the blackneſs and deformity of this ſin will better appear, if we take a view (only a curſory view) of its cauſes, its concomitants, and its effects.

Now hereſies and ſchiſms moſt uſually grow from one of theſe roots—from pride, when men will admit of nothing but what they underſtand and approve, and if they cannot raiſe their conceptions to things, will degrade things to their conceptions—from vanity, when men look down with contempt upon the reſt of the world as weak ſuperſtitious creatures, and think declaiming againſt received opinions a mark of great wit and uncommon genius—from ambition, when men deſire to diſtinguiſh themſelves by forming a party and making a noiſe in the world, and care not whether they are miſtaken, ſo that they can be talked of and known—from reſentment, when the Church not ſufficiently (as they think) honoring them, they turn the edge of their ſatir againſt the Church; and not being able to riſe by the right ſide, endevor to ſet themſelves at the head of a wrong, like Arius, who being diſappointed of a biſhoprick, turned heretic and diſturbed the peace of Chriſtendom—from ſuſpicion, when from having diſcovered errors in ſome articles of religion,

they preſently conclude all articles to be error and impoſition—from ſenſuality, when mens luſts and paſſions cloud their underſtandings, and hinder them from diſcerning the truth; or when they find their darling ſins directly oppoſed by the principles of Chriſtianity, and ſooner will deny theſe, than renounce thoſe. And theſe are the things, which generally give birth to hereſy and ſchiſm.

They are uſually attended with profaneneſs or ſpiritual pride and hypocriſy. The heretic (and the ſame may be ſaid of the ſchiſmatic) is often a profane ſcoffer and jeſter, delights in caviling and ſporting with things ſerious and ſacred, ridicules arguments inſtead of confuting them, and exerciſes a great deal of falſe wit and unbecoming drollery. Uſe ever ſo much reaſon againſt his favorite opinions, it will be to him only "as ſounding braſs or a tinkling cymbal." You would think you have him; but you have him not. For he is proof againſt demonſtration itſelf; and texts of ſcripture with him are like the green withs upon Sampſon's hands broke with a touch. You will not (1) perſuade him, even though you perſuade him; and confute him ever ſo much, yet you will never convince him. But if he happen to be not of this light and profane ſpirit, he is then preciſe and hypocritical; if he act not a Sinner and Publican, he is ſure to play the part of the Scribe and the Phariſee. He profeſſeth himſelf impartial and unbiaſſed in his inquiries, while he readeth all on one ſide and none on the other, and ſearcheth here and there for arguments only to puzzle others and deceive himſelf: Nay he will not ſtick at citing negatives as affirmatives, and affirmatives as negatives, quoting only parts of ſentences, and omitting or adding words at pleaſure; though certainly making falſe quotations in religious diſputes is as diſhoneſt as ſuborning falſe witneſſes in civil controverſies. He proteſts ſolemnly that he aimeth at nothing but the diſcovery of truth; he pretends great eſteem of the ſcripture, great reverence of our Saviour; he boweth the knee and crieth "Hail King of the Jews," and at the ſame time thruſteth a ſpear into his ſide, "and crucifieth to himſelf the "Son of God afreſh and putteth him to an open ſhame." Beſides

(1) Non perſuadebis etiamſi perſuaſeris.

theſe

theſe ill qualities, he is generally very poſitive and perverſe himſelf, and very ſevere and cruel againſt others: for we may ever remark, that they, who have the leaſt reaſon on their ſide, have the moſt zeal, and what they want in arguments, they make up with confidence and paſſion. With theſe cauſes and ingredients it is no wonder, that St. Paul (Gal. V. 20.) reckons *hereſies* among "the works of the fleſh," and ſays (Tit. III. 11.) that the heretic "ſinneth, being condemned of himſelf." If ever he reflects ſeriouſly upon his own conduct, his own heart, unleſs ſtrangely blinded and perverted by partiality and prejudice, muſt condemn him. 'Errare poſſum, hæreticus eſſe nolo,' was a memorable ſaying of St. Auſtin; and there is a manifeſt diſtinction between error and hereſy. Errors are only defects of the judgment and underſtanding, but hereſies are faults of a corrupt will and affections.

As to the conſequences and ill effects of this crime, they are too many to be told, too viſible to be concealed. What begets more fanaticiſm and enthuſiaſm on the one ſide, more ſcepticiſm and infidelity on the other? What breedeth greater diſorders and convulſions within, or opens a wider door to violence from without? What expoſeth religion more to the laughter and inſults of thoſe who "ſit in the ſeat of "the ſcornful, who ſay in their hearts There, There, ſo would we "have it?" What hath more hindered and ſtopt the progreſs of the goſpel, and been a greater obſtacle to "the kingdoms of the world "becoming the kingdoms of the Lord and his Chriſt?"—Well, therefore, might our Saviour denounce, "Woe to that man by whom the "offenſe cometh; Better were it for him that a milſtone were hanged "about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the ſea."

Two inferences will neceſſarily ariſe from the two foregoing heads of diſcourſe. No doubt you have anticipated them in your thoughts, but however I will beg leave to ſay a word upon each of them.

1. Let not hereſies and ſchiſms prejudice us againſt the truth of the Chriſtian religion. It would indeed have been more glorious and happy for us, had there been an entire union and concord and harmony among men; for ſuch will be the condition of the Church triumphant in heaven: But this was not poſſible, or, if poſſible, not proper to be accompliſhed

compliſhed in this world, which admits of nothing pure nothing perfect, and is deſigned only as a ſtate of trial and preparation for a world to come. Adoreable therefore is the wiſdom of the great Diſpoſer of things, which out of a neceſſary evil can bring ſo much good, and from the weakneſs and inconſtancy of ſome can derive the means of ſtrengthening and fixing the faith of others. (Pſal. LXXVI. 10.) "The "fierceneſs of men, O God, ſhall turn to thy praiſe, and the fierce- "neſs of them ſhalt thou refrain." The ſcriptures are plain, and eaſy, and intelligible in all points neceſſary; and if men however will be raiſing little cavils and diſputes, theſe things argue great perverſeneſs in them, and not want of care and foreſight in God. If differences in mens opinions are any objection to the truth of Chriſtianity, they are equally an objection to the truth of every thing beſides; ſince there is nothing in the world (no great important thing) which hath not again and again been made the ſubject of debate. Let us not therefore think the worſe of the Chriſtian religion for the vices of thoſe who profeſs it: men will ſtill be men, and all things are liable to corruption, the beſt perhaps to the greateſt.

2. Seeing hereſy and ſchiſm are ſuch great and pernicious ſins, we muſt be ſure (Heb. X. 23.) to "hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith "without wavering," and not be (Eph. IV. 14.) "like children toſſed "to and fro with every wind of doctrin." We muſt be continually upon our guard, and beware of the inſinuation and addreſs, the "ſlight "and cunning craftineſs of thoſe, who lie in wait to deceive." We muſt (Rom. XVI. 17, 18.) "mark them which cauſe diviſions and "offenſes contrary to the doctrin which we have learned, and avoid "them, For they that are ſuch ſerve not our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but "their own belly," their own temporal ends and purpoſes; "and by "good words and fair ſpeeches deceive the hearts of the ſimple." But though they are bad men, yet we ſhould not therefore perſecute them for their opinions, haraſs and oppreſs them; the governors of the Church, as St. Paul directs Titus, (III. 10.) ſhould admoniſh them, "and after the firſt and ſecond admonition reject," that is excommunicate them; and private Chriſtians ſhould obſerve St. John's rule

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(2 John 10, 11.) " not to receive them into their houſe, neither bid " them God ſpeed, for he that biddeth them God ſpeed, is partaker " of their evil deeds," in ſhort have no communication or intercourſe with them. We muſt endevor to underſtand the grounds of our religion and be able to give (1 Pet. III. 15.) " a reaſon of the hope that " is in us," not liſtleſs and ſupine on the one hand, nor yet too prying and precipitant on the other, docible but not credulous, flexible but not inconſtant, ſteddy but not obſtinate, ſtudious without pride, impartial without ſcepticiſm, inquiſitive without love of novelty. We muſt ſtudy to be quiet, and continually bear in mind that pathetic exhortation of the apoſtle, (1 Cor. I. 10.) " Now I beſeech you, brethren, " by the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that ye all ſpeak the ſame " thing, and that there be no diviſions," σχισματα no ſchiſms, " among " you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the ſame mind and " in the ſame judgement." Finally, would we think clearly, we muſt live ſoberly; would we be truly orthodox Chriſtians, we muſt be good men, and in our daily prayers humbly beg of God (John XVI. 13.) " the Spirit of truth to guide us into all truth."

From all falſe doctrin, hereſy and ſchiſm, from hardneſs of heart and contempt of thy word and commandment

Good Lord deliver us.

DISSERTATION XIX.

On the two GREAT COMMANDMENTS.

OUR Saviour having put the Sadducees to ſilence by his ingenuity and addreſs in anſwering their captious queſtions, the Phariſees gather about him, (Matt. XXII.) and one of them who was " a law-

" yer,"

" yer," an interpreter and expounder of the law of Moſes, propoſeth a queſtion to him, (ver. 35.) (πειράζων αὐτὸν) " tempting him," probably not in a bad ſenſe with deſign to inſnare him in his diſcourſe, but rather in a good ſenſe with intent only to prove him, as I think we may collect from the parallel place in St. Mark, and as the queen of Sheba (1 Kings X. 1.) came to Solomon (πειράσαι αὐτὸν) to " tempt him" or " prove him with hard queſtions." The queſtion that the lawyer propoſeth is this, (ver. 36.) " Maſter which is the great command- " ment in the law?" a queſtion that we may ſuppoſe had been much controverted among them, as in later times there have been great diſputes about points fundamental and not fundamental, about poſitive and moral duties. Our Saviour's anſwer is ſhort and clear, (ver. 37.) " Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, " and with all thy ſoul, and with all thy mind:" a commandment ſo plain and eaſy that every one at the firſt hearing of it underſtands it, and thoſe who would diſtinguiſh between the terms, and explain particularly what is meant by the *heart*, and the *ſoul*, and the *mind*, have rather obſcured than illuſtrated a truth, which is bright and evident enough of itſelf, this variety of expreſſion being uſed only to expreſs the ſincerity and intenſeneſs of the love that we ought to have for Almighty God. " This," ſaith our Saviour, (ver. 38.) " is " the firſt and great commandment;" the *firſt* in dignity, and the *greateſt* in extent; " and the ſecond is like unto it," (ver. 39.) The lawyer had aſked only which was " the great commandment in the " law," but our Saviour omits not the other which is ſo near akin to it, " Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf." I need not obſerve, that, in the language of ſcripture, our neighbour is every man, who lieth within the ſphere of our charity or benevolence; and ſo we ſhould always do unto others, as we could wiſh in right reaſon that they would do unto ourſelves. " On theſe two commandments," ſaith our Saviour, (ver. 40.) " hang all the law and the prophets." Theſe are the two great principles of religion, and the fountains from which flow all the other precepts of divine revelation. From theſe they may all originally be derived, and into theſe they may all ultimately be reſolved.

Love

Love in the moral world is ſomething like gravitation in the natural. As gravitation is the great law of nature, ſo love is the great law of morality. They both pervade and uphold the whole ſyſtem; and it would be well, if we would ſuffer the one to operate in the moral world, as conſtantly and regularly as the other doth in the natural.

The precepts of the law and of the prophets who wrote to enforce the law, are according to the common diviſion either *ceremonial* or *judicial* or *moral*. Now the *ceremonial law* may all be comprehended and ranged under that one precept of *the love of God*; for if we truly love God, we ſhall not think much of complying with whatever ceremonies he ſhall inſtitute and appoint. In like manner the *judicial law* may all be comprehended and ranged under that other precept of *the love of our neighbour*; for if we love our neigbour as ourſelves, much more ſhall we obſerve the forms of juſtice between man and man. But the law of God is more properly the *moral law*; and the moral law is abridged in the *two tables*; and the two tables are compriſed in theſe *two principles*, the duties of the *firſt* table in the *love of God*, and the duties of the *ſecond* table in the *love of our neighbour*.

If "we love the Lord our God with all our hearts and with all our "ſouls and with all our minds," the conſequence is plain, we ſhall not have any other God beſides him, nor bring any thing into competition with him; we ſhall not diſhonor his infinite majeſty or debaſe his ſpiritual nature by worſhipping him under any image or ſenſible repreſentation; we ſhall reverence his holy name, and not profane it by curſing or ſwearing, by perjury or blaſphemy; we ſhall adore him as our creator, and for this purpoſe religiouſly keep his ſabbaths; which are the duties of the *firſt* table. And which are the duties of the *ſecond* table; we ſhall be dutiful to parents, obedient to magiſtrates, as we ſhould expect the ſame if we were parents or magiſtrates ourſelves; we ſhall do nothing to hurt or indanger our neighbour's life; we ſhall not injure him in the tendereſt part by diſhonoring his bed; we ſhall neither forcibly invade nor fraudulently impair his property; we ſhall ſay nothing maliciouſly or even needleſly to wound and blaſt his reputation; nor in a word covet any thing that is our neighbour's; if "we

" love our neighbour as ourſelves." And this is the reaſoning of St. Paul himſelf concerning the duties of the ſecond table; (Rom. XIII. 8, &c.) " Owe no man any thing but to love another, for he that " loveth another hath fulfilled the law; For this, thou ſhalt not com- " mit adultery, thou ſhalt not kill, thou ſhalt not ſteal, thou ſhalt not " bear falſe witneſs, thou ſhalt not covet; and if there be any other " commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this ſaying Thou ſhalt " love thy neigbour as thyſelf; Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, " and therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Hence St. James (II. 8.) calleth it " the royal law," the reſt are as it were its ſubjects and attendents: and St. Paul in another place (1 Tim. I. 5.) ſaith, that it is the *end* of the commandment; " Now the end of the command- " ment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conſcience, and " of faith unfeigned."

Nay the improvements which the goſpel hath made upon the moral law, as particularly in the caſe of ſelf-denial, forgiveneſs of injuries, love of our enemies, and the like, theſe improvements I ſay are reducible to theſe *two commandments*. For the love of God, if we love him with all our ſouls, will eaſily reconcile us to the ſeverities of religion, raiſe our affections above this world, and put us upon aſpiring after that happy ſtate where we ſhall ſee God as he is, and live with him and enjoy his beatific preſence to all eternity. And the love of our neighbour if we love our neighbour as ourſelves, will as eaſily induce us to forgive the injuries which he may have done us, and (1 Pet. III. 9.) " not to render evil for evil or railing for railing, but contra- " wiſe bleſſing;" (Rom. XII. 21.) " not to be overcome of evil, but " to overcome evil with good." Nay farther, not only the moral improvements, but even the poſitive inſtitutions of the Chriſtian religion, baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper, may be ſaid to hang on *theſe two commandments*. Baptiſm is to ſhow our love and faith in God; it is entring ourſelves into his Church; liſting ourſelves into his ſervice, to fight under the banner of Chriſt againſt ſin, the world, and the devil. The Lord's ſupper is to ſhow both our love to God and our love to our neighbour; our gratitude and thankſgiving to God for the death and

ſacrifice

ſacrifice of his only ſon; our charity and communion with our neighbour, as being in Chriſt Jeſus a member of the ſame body with ourſelves, and therefore to be loved as ourſelves. So true is it that "on "theſe two commandments hang all the law and the prophets;" and not only all the precepts of Moſes and the prophets, but even of Chriſt and his apoſtles. And having thus explained the words, we may now deduce ſome uſeful conſequences from them.

1. It is a natural conſequence from this aſſertion in the text, that there is a chain or connexion of reaſoning running through the laws of God, and morality is properly a ſcience and capable of demonſtration as well as the mathematics. How vain then are the pretences of thoſe fanciful enthuſiaſts, who refuſe to have their doctrins tried by reaſon; they are to be judged only by the ſpirit and the light within; and ſo make religion, inſtead of a regular orderly ſyſtem as it is, a rhapſody of incoherent inconſiſtent notions? On the other hand how unjuſt is the cenſure of thoſe mathematical moraliſts, who ſlight and diſparage the ſcripture, as if it was itſelf ſuch a rhapſody? We ſee that it is all derived from and reducible to certain principles; though it be not drawn up in the form of theorems and problems, with a dry and cold exactneſs that is fitter for the ſchools than for life and action. No, the ſcripture is more raiſed and animated; and "the law of the Lord is" not only "per-"fect, converting the ſoul," but is "ſweeter alſo than honey and the "honey-comb." (Pſal. XIX. 7, 10.) Dry abſtracted reaſon alone will not prevail with mere mortals; it requires ſome fire and fancy to pierce this cruſt of fleſh, and reach the ſoul: And thoſe certainly are the happieſt compoſitions which unite both reaſon and eloquence; at the ſame time that they convince the head, warm the heart; and like the ſun, inlighten and inliven together.

2. It is another natural conſequence from this aſſertion in the text, that morality is the moſt eſſential part of religion, ſince our Saviour here maketh the moral duties the foundation of the whole. And upon this definition of our Saviour the ſcribe immediately returns the following anſwer, as we read in St. Mark, (XII. 32, &c.) "Well Maſter thou "haſt ſaid the truth, for there is one God and there is none other but

" He; And to love him with all the heart, and with all the under-
" ſtanding, and with all the ſoul, and with all the ſtrength, and to
" love his neighbour as himſelf is more than all whole burnt-offerings
" and ſacrifices;" which though ſpoken by a Jew, yet our Saviour intimates was a ſaying worthy of a Chriſtian; " And when Jeſus ſaw
" that he anſwered diſcreetly, he ſaid unto him, Thou art not far
" from the kingdom of God." The prophet Micah hath (VI. 6, &c.) a ſentiment very much reſembling this of our Saviour, wherein he reduces religion in like manner to morality as its ſum and ſubſtance; " Where-
" with ſhall I come before the Lord and bow myſelf before the high God?
" —Will the Lord be pleaſed with thouſands of rams, or with ten thou-
" ſands of rivers of oil?—He hath ſhowed thee, O man, what is good;
" and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do juſtly and to love
" mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?" The ſentiment we ſee is much the ſame with a little variety of expreſſion; the prophet's *doing juſtly* and *loving mercy* anſwering to the *love of our neighbour*, and the *walking humbly with God* to our Saviour's *love of God*. And without doubt morality is the ſum and ſubſtance of religion; and poſitive inſtitutions are only ſo far of value, as they are expreſſive of or conducive to theſe great moral duties, piety towards God and charity towards men. " Theſe ought ye to have done," as our Saviour determins in this caſe, (Matt. XXIII. 23.) " and not to leave the other undone." It was therefore very unreaſonable in the emperor Julian to cenſure as he doth the Chriſtian religion, for teaching the world only what they knew before, to do no murder, not to commit adultery, not to ſteal, and the like. What he thought a diſparagement to the Chriſtian religion is certainly for its honor; and it is not only not to be blamed for injoining theſe duties, but on the contrary it would be greatly to be blamed if it did not injoin them. For theſe are the very baſis of all religion; and not only no religion, but even no government or ſociety can ſubſiſt without them. (Matt. IX. 13.) " Go ye" therefore " and
" learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not ſacrifice."
(1 Sam. XV. 22.) " Behold to obey is better than ſacrifice, and to
" hearken than the fat of rams." (Iſa. L. 11, &c.) " To what pur-
" poſe

" poſe is the multitude of your ſacrifices unto me? ſaith the Lord—
" bring no more vain oblations"—but " waſh ye, make ye clean, put
" away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, ceaſe to do
" evil, learn to do well"—and then " though your ſins be as ſcarlet,
" they ſhall be as white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon they
" ſhall be as wool."

3. A third conſequence therefore naturally following from this aſſertion in the text is the neceſſity of good works in order to ſalvation; for good works muſt certainly be neceſſary, ſince our Saviour maketh all religion in a manner to depend upon them. And yet this neceſſity, as plain and evident as it is in every page of the goſpel, hath been denied and invalidated in different methods by two different ſorts of believers.

The one ſort have directly denied that there is any neceſſity for good works: Chriſt's righteouſneſs they ſay is made our righteouſneſs: And ſo we have need only of a juſtifying faith, of a firm reliance and recumbence, as they ſpeak, upon the merits and ſatisfaction of Chriſt; and believing only that we are the elect of God, we are the elect of God; believing only that we ſhall be ſaved, we ſhall be ſaved. But doth not St. James ſay expreſly (II. 20, 26.) that " faith without works
" is dead? As the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without
" works is dead alſo." And though St. Paul ſays indeed (Rom. III. and IV.) that we are juſtified by *faith* and not by *works*, yet the *works* he meaneth by which we are not juſtified are the works of the Levitical law, and the *faith* he meaneth by which we are juſtified is " faith" that " worketh by love," the love of God and the love of our neighbour. Faith indeed may be the means of our juſtification, but good works are the condition, and the condition without which faith will be vain and to no purpoſe. (1 Cor. XIII. 2.) " Though I have all faith,
" ſo that I could remove mountains, and have no charity, I am no-
" thing."

The other ſort do not, like theſe, directly deny the neceſſity of good works; but they invalidate and deny it by conſequence, ſubſtituting other terms and conditions of juſtification. For their doctrin is that attrition, or ſorrow for ſin, proceeding not from any love of God or

any

any deſire of amendment, but merely out of fear of eternal puniſhment, together with confeſſion and the abſolution of the prieſt, will put a dying ſinner into a ſtate of grace and ſalvation; ſo that though he hath lived the life of the wicked, yet he may die the death of the righteous, and his laſt end may be like his. (Gal. VI. 7.) "But be not deceived, "God is not mocked, for whatſoever a man ſoweth, that ſhall he alſo "reap." Pardons and indulgences, like opium, may lull the pain, and lay the conſcience aſleep; but what a fearful thing will it be, when the ſoul ſhall awaken again, to awaken from ſuch pleaſing dreams to eternal miſery! The profeſſion even of the true faith will not be of any advantage to us, unleſs our lives are agreeable to that profeſſion. One would think there was no need for the citing of authorities in ſo determined a caſe; for doth not the Apoſtle ſay, (Heb. XII. 14.) that "without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord?" And doth not our Saviour declare, and can any declaration be plainer, (Matt. VII. 21.) "Not every one that ſaith unto me Lord Lord ſhall enter into the "kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which "is in heaven?"

4. A fourth conſequence therefore naturally following from this aſſertion in the text is that the preaching of theſe moral duties, the love of God and the love of our neighbour, is indeed the preaching of revelation, ſince theſe moral duties are ſo main a part of revelation. And we have not only our Saviour's aſſertion for it, but likewiſe his example; for what is his ſermon in the mount but a diſcourſe explaining, and improving, and enforcing chiefly the moral duties, piety towards God, and charity towards men? So likewiſe St. Paul, when he was brought before the governor Felix to give an account of the faith in Chriſt, thought it not all foreign from his purpoſe, but very pertinent and proper for that auditory, (Acts XXIV. 25.) "to reaſon of righteouſneſs, "temperance, and judgment to come." Points of faith are indeed often neceſſary to be inſiſted on for the refutation of infidels and for the confirmation of believers; but the articles of the Chriſtian faith are none of them contrived merely for ſpeculation, but have all a moral tendency; and from the moſt ſpeculative ſubjects may yet be drawn ſeveral

practical

practical inferences; as we ſee the apoſtles, though they write their epiſtles uſually about ſome points of doctrin, yet conſtantly cloſe them with ſome moral ſentences. Let us not therefore think the preaching of good works to be unedifying; and much leſs let us think it, as ſome wild enthuſiaſtic ſectaries have thought it, to be the mark and character of a popiſh preacher. For what an honor would this be to the Church of Rome, and what a ſcandal to the Reformation; as if good works were the doctrin of the one and not of the other? The Church of Rome pretends to be very zealous in the preſſing of good works, as they call them; but what are the good works, which they recommend? The counting of beads, the repeating of Ave-Maries, pilgrimages and penances, benefactions to churches and monaſteries, with numberleſs other ceremonies and ſuperſtitions of the ſame nature: and not thoſe eternal and neceſſary duties, which are the life and ſoul of all religion, the love of God above all things, and the love of our neighbour as ourſelves. Theſe are what we conſtantly preach; and what we, and you, and all ſhould conſtantly practiſe; improving our morals by the ſtrength of our faith, and adorning our faith by the purity of our morals. "This is a faithful ſaying," as St. Paul ſays to Titus, (Tit. III. 8.) "and theſe things I will that thou af-"firm conſtantly, that they which have believed in God might be "careful to maintain good works; theſe things are good and pro-"fitable unto men."

5. Since theſe two commandments are the firſt and great principles of religion, they ſhould be likewiſe the great and ruling principles of our lives and actions. As they are injoined above all things, ſo certainly above all things we ſhould be careful to practiſe them. And let not men deceive themſelves in matters of ſuch importance. The love of God is not an enthuſiſtical warmth of imagination; it is not a rapturous ſtrain and flow of devotion; it is not I know not what notional zeal and myſtic union with God: but it is what the ſcripture plainly defines it, and no better definition can be given of it; (1 John V. 3.) "This is the love of God that we keep his com-"mandments;" and indeed without keeping his commandments, all

all our zeal and devotion, all our rapture and enthuſiaſm will be vain and ineffectual to any good purpoſe in this world or the world to come. It is no better than a mockery of God to call him *Lord, Lord*; and not to do the things which he commands us. In the ſame manner the love of our neighbour is not formal profeſſions and empty compliments, but hearty affection and real ſervices; and much leſs is it to be cruel out of charity, and to perſecute haraſs and deſtroy the bodies of men under pretence of ſaving their ſouls. This is not loving our neighbour as ourſelves; this is not doing as we would be done by; and we may be certain that can never be the true Church, which ſo notoriouſly contradicts and ſubverts the very firſt principles of religion. For theſe firſt principles are not only true in themſelves, but are the ſtandard and meaſure of truth in other caſes; and what coincides and agrees with them, that is true and conformable to the will of God; what claſhes and interferes with them, that is falſe and repugnant to the will of God. Let us therefore above all things fix theſe principles deep in our ſouls. We Chriſtians are of all men the moſt obliged to the obſervance of them; and if we ſhould not obſerve them, we ſhall be the moſt inexcuſable of all men. For beſides the motives and arguments drawn from natural reaſon, there are ſeveral which are peculiar to the Chriſtian revelation: and the goſpel in this reſpect as well as in others hath made noble improvements upon morality. Natural reaſon may teach us to love God, as a being of infinite perfections, our creator and preſerver, the author of all the good that we enjoy and of all that we can expect: but how are theſe conſiderations hightened and improved by the Chriſtian revelation, which repreſents God under the amiable character not only of a creator and preſerver but of a ſaviour and redeemer, ſending his only ſon into the world for our ſakes, to live for our example, to die for our ſins, to riſe again for our juſtification, to give us the moſt complete rule of duty here, and the moſt aſſured hopes of heaven and happineſs hereafter. Natural reaſon may incline us to love our neighbour for our own neceſſity and convenience, for the peace and order of human ſociety: but what additional ſtrength doth

doth this duty receive from the Chriſtian revelation, which hath united us all not only as fellow-creatures, but as brethren and members of the ſame body; exhibits the moſt powerful and engaging examples of love in God and the Son of God; injoins it as the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of our religion; maketh it the trying article by which chiefly we ſhall be acquitted or condemned at the laſt day; and aſſures us that what we ſhall do or not do in this kind to the leaſt of the brethren, our Saviour will accept as done or not done to himſelf? (Eph. IV. 1, &c.) "I beſeech you therefore that ye walk "worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowlineſs "and meekneſs, with long ſuffering, forbearing one another in love; "Endevoring to keep the unity of the ſpirit in the bond of peace." There is no being happy here or hereafter without love; it is the harmony of the world, and the temper of heaven, the temper of the bleſſed ſpirits, of the holy angels, of the Son of God, of God himſelf; "for (1 John IV. 16.) God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwell-"eth in God and God in him." (Eph. V. 1, 2.) "Be ye therefore "followers of God as dear children; and walk in love as Chriſt alſo "hath loved us."

DISSERTATION XX.

On the Parable of the TALENTS.

IN the XXIVth chapter of St. Matthew our Saviour treateth of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and from that ſubject very naturally paſſeth to (what the deſtruction of Jeruſalem typified) the end of the world. In the XXVth chapter he is ſtill purſuing the ſame diſcourſe of the end of the world, and deſcribing the manner and circumſtances of his com-

ing to judgment. This he doth at firſt by way of parable, to open the truth by degrees, and inſinuate it in the moſt pleaſing agreeable manner. The parables which he employs upon this occaſion are that of the ten virgins, and this of the talents. And having thus prepared the minds of his hearers, he deſcribes the proceſs at the day of judgment more plainly and more without a figure.

Now it is my deſign in the following diſcourſe to make ſome obſervations from this *parable of the talents*, ſuch as ſeem naturally to flow from it, and may be of uſe to us in the great concern of life and action. And that theſe obſervations may the more eaſily be carried away and better retained by the memory, they ſhall be reduced only to *four*; but four ſuch as will include the moſt material points of the parable.

1. I obſerve from hence that men are intruſted by God with different talents, ſome with more and ſome with leſs; and each man is accountable for the talents, be they more or be they leſs, wherewith he is intruſted. For here in the parable, (ver. 14, 15, 19.) "the man "traveling into a far country called his own ſervants, and delivered un- "to them his goods; and unto one he gave five talents, to another "two, and to another one, to every man according to his ſeveral ability, "and ſtraightway took his journey: And after a long time the lord of "thoſe ſervants cometh and reckoneth with them."

Now that men have different talents is as evident as that there are different men in the world. Some men have *five* talents, ſuch are the rich, the wiſe, the great and mighty of this world: others are very much inferior to theſe, but yet ſuperior to ſome others, and ſuch may be ſaid to have *two* talents: others again have only *one* talent, who though they are not men of great abilities, yet are not without all ability; who though they are not indued with ſuch various powers as the former, yet are poſſeſſed of ſome power; and there is no one even of the meaneſt of men who is not intruſted with ſome talent or other. And the wiſdom and power of the great Creator are more diſplayed, and the ends of his providence are better ſerved by this variety in the diſtribution of talents, than they would or could have been, had men been all of equal abilities, and all poſſeſſed equal talents.

But

But men themſelves ſeem to be ſenſible enough of the difference of mens abilities, eſpecially when the advantage lieth on their own ſide: It is to be wiſhed they were as ſenſible, that all theſe different abilities are ſo many different talents committed to them by God, for which they muſt render a ſtrict and ſolemn account at the day of judgment. But alas! it very often happens, that inſtead of demeaning themſelves as ſervants and ſtewards, they behave more like lords and maſters; inſtead of looking upon things as another's lent them only for a ſhort time, they uſe them as if they were to be their own for ever. But to ſuch perſons one may reply in the words of the apoſtle, (1 Cor. IV. 7.) "Who maketh thee to differ from another, and what haſt thou that "thou didſt not receive? now if thou didſt receive it why doſt thou "glory," why doſt thou behave, "as if thou hadſt not received it?" "Every good gift (James I. 17.) and every perfect gift is from above, "and cometh down from the Father of lights;" all that we enjoy, all that we have are as it were ſo many talents; and are not our own properly but are God's: from him we received them, and to him we ſtand accountable for them; and we ſhould therefore take care to uſe them accordingly, not overvaluing ourſelves for our great abilities, nor deſpiſing others for their mean ones, but in all things acting like thoſe who muſt render an account. For, as our Lord and Judge himſelf ſpeaketh, (Luke XVI. 12.) "If ye have not been faithful in that which is ano-"ther man's, who ſhall give you that which is your own?" If ye have not been faithful in that which God hath graciouſly lent you for this life, who ſhall give you that which ſhall be your own for an everlaſting poſſeſſion?

2. I obſerve from hence that men of the leaſt abilities are the moſt apt to bury their talents in a napkin. For here in the parable, (ver. 18, 16, 17.) he who had received *only one* talent, "went and digged "in the earth and hid" his Lord's money, whereas he who had received the *five* talents "went and traded with the" ſame, and "made "them other five," and likewiſe he who had received *two*, he alſo "gained other two." Men of great ſouls and inlarged ideas are always the moſt uſeful in their generation, while others of little minds

and narrow ways of thinking are generally uſeleſs members at beſt, and frequently burdens to ſociety: as the leſſer waters often ſtagnate till they ſtink, but the great rivers ebb and flow for the delight and benefit of mankind. I do not pretend to aſſert, that men of great parts and talents always well employ thoſe talents, but only that they do generally employ them one way or other; their ſpirits are too active to lie idle, and they muſt be doing, though they are doing ill. The drones of mankind are for the moſt part ſuch as can produce no honey of their own; men of dull drowſy lethargic natures, who have neither heads to contrive great things, nor hearts to put them in execution. (1) Ambition or the love of glory groweth moſt in the greateſt and brighteſt geniuſes, and commonly beareth very good fruit or very bad, and maketh men either angels or devils. It was a glorious ambition indeed in him who had five talents to gain other five, and in him who had two to gain other two, and God grant that all who have the like number of talents may make the like good improvement!

3. I obſerve from hence that God proportions his everlaſting rewards not ſo much to the number of mens talents, as to the uſe and improvement that is made of them. For here in the parable, (ver. 21, 23.) to him who with his *two* talents made other two, as well as to him who with his *five* made other five it is ſaid, "Well done, good and "faithful ſervant, thou haſt been faithful over a few things, I will "make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy "Lord." Or as it is in the parallel place in St. Luke, (XIX. 16, &c.) He who with his *one* pound gained *ten pounds* is made ruler over *ten cities*, and he who with his *one* pound gained *five pounds* is made ruler over *five cities*.

But though God principally regards the uſe and improvement that we make of our talents; yet thus much regard, I believe, is had to the number of talents, that he who hath a greater number of talents and employs them well, will obtain ſomewhat a higher ſtation in heaven than he who hath a ſmaller number of talents and employs them

(1) In maximis animis ſplendidiſſimiſque ingeniis plerumque exiſtunt honoris, imperii, potentiæ, gloriæ cupiditates. Cic. Off. L. I. c. 8.

as well, not better. For inſtance, an apoſtle who hath lived up to his knowlege and diſcharged his duty, will, I conceive, have ſome more glorious reward, than an ordinary Chriſtian who hath lived up to his knowlege and diſcharged his duty; as good men will certainly be happy, but good angels, I apprehend, will ſtill be happier. Indeed he who doubled his *two* talents is admitted into glory as well as he who doubled his *five*; but this latter, I conceive, is admitted into a higher degree of glory, (ver. 29.) " for unto every one that hath " ſhall be given and he ſhall have *abundance*;" and it is obſervable that the talent taken from the unprofitable ſervant (ver. 28.) is given to him who had *ten talents*. The one is diſtinguiſhed and raiſed above the other in this world, and why ſhould he not in like manner be diſtinguiſhed and raiſed above him in the next, the one having made no leſs improvement of his talents that he ſhould be degraded, and the other having made no more improvement of his that he ſhould be exalted? The one too will be more ſeverely puniſhed than the other, if he uſeth his talents ill; and if he uſeth them well, why ſhould he not be more glorioufly rewarded? And what a mighty encouragement is this to us all to take care and improve our talents, and eſpecially to thoſe who have great talents, and therefore are capable of making greater improvements, and attaining to a higher degree, a fuller meaſure of bliſs and glory?

4. And laſtly I obſerve from hence (what I deſign more largely to inſiſt upon) the great ſin of doing nothing, of burying our talent in a napkin. For here in the parable, (ver. 29, &c.) the ſervant did not ſquander away and conſume the talent, he was only *afraid* and *went* and *hid it in the earth*, and brought it again entire to his lord: but even for this the talent is taken from him, and he himſelf is condemned to be caſt into outer darkneſs. And if he was ſo ſeverely puniſhed for burying his one talent, of how much ſeverer a puniſhment ſhall they be thought worthy, who bury many talents? There is no man but may become ſerviceable to his kind in one capacity or other: and whatever our ſphere and condition be, it is not enough for us to do no ill, but we muſt continually be doing ſome

good;;

good; it is not enough for us to ſpend our time innocently, but we muſt live uſefully; it is not enough (2) to avoid blame, but we muſt merit praiſe. All the talents which God hath given us, he hath given us to be employed for his glory and the good of mankind; and though to employ them ill be the greater ſin, yet it is a great ſin not to employ them at all. More particularly.

Riches are talents; and we muſt not only not ſpend them in luxury and vice, but we muſt beſtow them in acts of mercy and kindneſs. If theſe talents are buried in the earth (as ſometimes they are even litterally) the very *ruſt* of them, as St. James ſpeaketh (James V. 3.) will be "a witneſs againſt us." The not doing good with them is doing ill, the not being charitable is being cruel. In the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus, it is obſervable that the Rich man was not guilty of any other ſin that we read of, but only want of tenderneſs and compaſſion to poor Lazarus, who "was "laid at his gate full of ſores." He lived at eaſe himſelf, and little regarded the pains of others; and becauſe he had made no better uſe of his wealth in this world, he was miſerably tormented in the other. In the account alſo which our Saviour himſelf hath given of the proceſs at the day of judgment, immediately ſubjoined to this parable which we are explaining, we are inſtructed, that not only the doing of evil, but even the not doing of good, the *not* feeding the hungry, the *not* cloathing the naked, the *not* viſiting the ſick will draw down upon us that terrible ſentence, "Depart ye "curſed into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Power and authority are talents; and how truly contemptible is a tool in office, a mere nothing in authority, one who hath the power to do good, and yet hath not the ſpirit to do it? Caligula's horſe made Conſul was every whit as good a magiſtrate. What was the iniquity of old Eli, which brought down ſuch heavy judgments upon himſelf and his family? It was not that he was himſelf a vicious prieſt and corrupt magiſtrate, but (1 Sam. III. 13.) "becauſe

(2) ——— vitavi denique culpam
Non laudem merui. Hor.

"his

" his ſons made themſelves vile and he reſtrained them not." Perſons in power and authority are accountable not only for their own ſins, but in great meaſure for thoſe of others, which they may prevent and reform. Their conniving at crimes is criminal; their not forbidding is conſenting; their not puniſhing is encouraging, and maketh them ſtrictly and properly (1 Tim. V. 22.) " partakers " of other men's ſins."

Learning and knowlege are talents; and they are not to be put under a bed or a buſhel, but muſt be ſet on a candleſtick that they may give light to others. Concealed (3) knowlege is little better than downright ignorance. " Stir up therefore the gift of God that " is in thee," as St. Paul ſpeaketh to Timothy, (2 Tim. I. 6. 1 Tim. IV. 13, 15.) " Give attendence to reading, to exhortation, " to doctrin, meditate upon theſe things, give thyſelf wholly to " them, that thy profiting may appear to all." And if burying theſe excellent talents is bad in ſingle perſons, how much worſe muſt it be in ſocieties, when nurſeries of learning degenerate into nurſeries of idleneſs? Even in the Church of Rome itſelf there is hardly any thing more ſcandalous than the rich foundations of ſome pampered lazy Eccleſiaſtics, whoſe great buſineſs it is to live well and to do nothing. I wiſh there is not too juſt reaſon for applying to ſuch ſpiritual watchmen that ſevere lively deſcription in the prophet Iſaiah; (LVI. 10, &c.) " His watchmen are blind; they are all " ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark, ſleeping, " lying down, loving to ſlumber; Yea they are greedy dogs which " can never have enough, and they are ſhepherds that cannot un- " derſtand, they all look to their own way every one for his gain from " his quarter; Come ye, ſay they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill " ourſelves with ſtrong drink, and to-morrow ſhall be as this day, and " much more abundant."

Time and opportunity are talents; and we ſhall be puniſhed for not uſing as well as for miſuſing them. " Diem perdidi, I have loſt a

(3) Paulum ſepultæ diſtat inertiæ
Celata virtus. Hor.

" day,"

" day," was a melancholy reflection to a (4) Heathen; and how much more ſhould it be ſo to a Chriſtian? The devil tempts other ſinners, but the idle man tempts the devil. (Eph. V. 15, 16.) " See then that " ye walk circumſpectly not as fools but as wiſe, redeeming the time, " becauſe the days are evil." Indeed the bow cannot be always bent, the mind cannot be ever fixt and intent on buſineſs; it is neceſſary that we ſhould have our diverſions and amuſements: but for the moſt part we may make one ſort of buſineſs a relief and diverſion to another, and we ſhould never give way to pleaſure but that we may return to buſineſs again with the greater life and vigor: As prudent huſbandmen ſow their ground now with one ſort of grain then with another, and never let it lie fallow but in order to make it more fruitful. All our vacant hours we may fill up with ſomething uſeful in one kind or other. " Whether we eat or drink, or whatſoever we do," (1 Cor. X. 31.) we may " do all to the glory of God." Our very diverſions and amuſements we may ſo contrive as to be ſome way ſerviceable, either to our minds or bodies or eſtates; and not kill ſo much of our precious time in play and ſuch impertinence, as debaſeth the mind, doeth no good to the body, and often great hurt to the eſtate. A fit entertainment indeed for an immortal ſoul, made in the image of God, made capable of knowing and imitating and enjoying him, to be engaged hours after hours, evenings after evenings, in ſuch poor low ideas as only a few cards and dice can afford! If thou haſt good ſenſe, it is a ſhame thus to bury it; and if thou haſt not, this is never the way to get it. I never heard of any perſon ſo loſt to reaſon as to juſtify downright gaming; this is generally allowed to be criminal: but it may be aſked what hurt is there in innocent play. He muſt be a rigid cenſor indeed who will abſolutely condemn all innocent play: but it is no longer innocent when it ingroſſeth ſo much of your time and attention; when it is made the buſineſs and delight of life; when not only every day in the week, but even the Lord's day is ſacrificed to it: And to your queſtion what hurt is there in it, it may be anſwered again, what good is there in it? for

(4) Titus.

it

it is not ſufficient that there is no hurt in it, but there muſt be ſome good; otherwiſe we bury our time, as the unprofitable ſervant in the parable did the talent, and we ſhall be puniſhed accordingly. Nay we do worſe, for the talent was preſerved and reſtored entire, but the moments once loſt are gone for ever. Remember the devout wiſh of the pſalmiſt, (Pſal. XC. 12.) "So teach us to number our "days that we may apply our hearts unto wiſdom?" Think how great a work you have to do upon earth, and how ſhort a time to do it in; and ſo ſpend your days now, as you ſhall wiſh you had ſpent them at the day of judgment.

And now to conclude as the Roman hiſtorian begins his hiſtory; (5) It becomes all men who would excel the other animals to endevor with their utmoſt power not to paſs their life in ſilence like the beaſts. There is hardly any thing more mortifying more inſupportable to generous ſpirits, than the thought of living uſeleſs, and leaving no memorial behind them. It is better not to live at all, than live to no purpoſe, and be among men, as cyphers are among figures, of no value or ſignification by themſelves, and ſerving only to make up the number. The wiſe man (Wiſd. V. 9, &c.) very elegantly compares ſuch as have lived and died, and had no ſign of virtue to ſhow to "a ſhadow paſſed away;" to "a poſt that haſted by;" to "a ſhip that paſſeth over the waves of the water, which when "it is gone by, the trace thereof cannot be found, neither the "path-way of the keel in the waves;" to "a bird that when ſhe "hath flown through the air, there is no token of her way to be "found;" and to "an arrow that when it is ſhot at a mark it "parteth the air which immediately cometh together again, ſo that "a man cannot know where it went through." Such men are in effect dead while they live; and their bodies are in a manner the graves and ſepulchres of their underſtandings. Could we ſtop at doing nothing, it would be ſomewhat more tolerable; but God knoweth from doing nothing to doing ill, from omiſſion of duty to

(5) Omnis homines qui ſeſe ſtudent præſtare cæteris animalibus, ſumma ope niti decet, ne vitam ſilentio tranſeant veluti pecora. Salluſt.

miſſion of ſin is a natural and almoſt neceſſary progreſs. If we will not go forwards, we ſhall be apt to go backwards; if we will not grow better, we ſhall be apt to grow worſe. "Let your loins" therefore (Luke XII. 35, 36.) "be girded about, and your lights burning, and "ye yourſelves like unto men that wait for their Lord."

There are but three ſorts of men in the world, the good, the bad and the indifferent; and what will be the end and portion of each of theſe we learn from plain teſtimonies of ſcripture. If thou doeſt well, thou wilt be applauded with a "Well done, good and faithful ſer-"vant; (Matt. XXV. 23.) thou haſt been faithful over a few things; "I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of "thy lord." If thou doeſt ill, thou wilt be condemned with a "De-"part thou curſed (ver. 41.) into everlaſting fire prepared for the de-"vil and his angels." If thou liveſt a mere animal life, eating, drinking, and ſleeping, doing little or no hurt and little or no good; thy ſentence will be, (ver. 30.) "Take away the talent from him, and caſt "ye the unprofitable ſervant into outer darkneſs; there ſhall be weep-"ing and gnaſhing of teeth."

That we may eſcape the two latter of theſe ſentences, and attain the former, God of his infinite mercy grant for the ſake of Chriſt Jeſus.

DISSERTATION XXI.

An Explanation of St. MARK IX. 49, 50.

IN the preceding verſes our bleſſed Saviour cautions his diſciples to avoid all occaſions of offenſe either to themſelves or others. Whatever it was that cauſed them to offend, their moſt darling paſſions, their moſt beloved intereſts, their moſt natural habits, they muſt part

part with them, even though they were as dear as a hand or foot or eye, and the loſs altogether as painful. It was better for them to enter into life "maimed" or "halt" or "blind" rather than having "two hands" or "two feet," or "two eyes" to be "caſt into hell-"fire, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. For "every one ſhall be ſalted with fire, and every ſacrifice ſhall be ſalted "with ſalt. Salt is good, but if the ſalt have loſt his ſaltneſs, where-"with will ye ſeaſon it? Have ſalt in yourſelves, and have peace one "with another?"

"For every one," ſaith He, "ſhall be ſalted with fire, and every "ſacrifice ſhall be ſalted with ſalt." Some (1) learned men have been for emending the text; but there doth not ſeem to be any neceſſity for that. They have not the authority of any MS. or printed copy for departing from the common reading; and the common reading is really better than the beſt of their conjectures. It is true there is ſome difficulty in it, but the difficulty perhaps is not ſo great as commentators would make it, who inſtead of clearing and explaining have puzzled and perplexed the meaning, as they often do. It would be of little uſe, and leſs entertainment to recite the different ſenſes which they have put upon this paſſage. I will only lay before you that, which appears to me the eaſieſt and beſt, and moſt agreeable to the text and the context.

"For every one ſhall be ſalted with fire;" not *every one* indefinitely, but every one, who doth *offend* in the manner that he had been ſpeaking of before, *ſhall be ſalted with fire*, ſhall not be deſtroyed with fire, but ſhall be *ſalted with fire*; ſhall be preſerved with fire like as with ſalt from corruption, it being the property of ſalt to preſerve from corruption. "And every ſacrifice ſhall be ſalted with ſalt," according to the divine command in the Levitical law, (Levit. II. 13) "Every "oblation of thy meat-offering ſhalt thou ſeaſon with ſalt." It is obſerved that καὶ *and* is ſometimes uſed for *as* by way of ſimilitude. As every ſacrifice or oblation of meat-offering under the law was to be *ſalted with ſalt* to preſerve it from corruption; ſo every one who doth

(1) Scaliger and others.

offend ſhall be *ſalted with fire*; the fire ſhall be of ſuch a nature that it ſhall *ſalt* him as it were, and preſerve him from corruption.

As this is the moſt eaſy conſtruction of the text, ſo likewiſe is it the moſt agreeable to the context. The cauſal particle *for* evidently ſhoweth that our Saviour is aſſigning a reaſon of what he had ſaid before. He had ſaid before, that we muſt ſubdue and mortify our deareſt inclinations if they cauſed us to offend; for it was better for us to ſubdue and mortify them, than by cheriſhing and indulging them "to be caſt "into hell-fire, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." But ſome of his hearers might perhaps think it ſtrange, that *their worm ſhould never die*, that *their fire ſhould never be quenched*; and hardly believe it poſſible for them to ſubſiſt for ever in ſuch a ſtate of torment: and therefore he now aſſigns a reaſon how it cometh to paſs that *their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched*; *For every one ſhall be ſalted with fire*; the *fire* ſhall be to them as *ſalt*; it ſhall not conſume, but ſeaſon them, and ſo make them capable of ſubſiſting for ever in everlaſting burnings. Here is a thing aſſerted, *their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched*; and a reaſon rendered, *for every one ſhall be* ſeaſoned or *ſalted with fire*. Whereas if we underſtand the words, as ſome very (2) learned men have underſtood them, *for every one ſhall be deſtroyed with fire*, the ſame word in Hebrew ſignifying both to *ſalt* and to *deſtroy*; this will be not only a ſtrange equivocal uſe of language, making the word *ſalt* to ſignify one thing in one part of the verſe and another in another, but it will be likewiſe aſſigning a reaſon for what it is no reaſon but rather the contrary. Only take the words in their common acceptation, and the ſenſe is good and the connexion clear; "Their worm dieth "not and the fire is not quenched," their torments ſhall be everlaſting in the flames; "For every one ſhall be ſalted with fire," every one (3) ſhall be ſalted with that very fire which torments him; that fire ſhall have a ſalt therein, which will make their body incorruptible. "And "every ſacrifice ſhall be ſalted with ſalt;" that is, the wicked ſhall in that torment of fire be made a ſacrifice of everlaſting holocauſt to the divine juſtice, whereof God has given a proof and illuſtration in the

(2) Le Clerc. Dr. Clarke.

typical

typical law, having therein commanded that all ſacrifices ſhould be ſalted, which were offered by fire. And after all let not the expreſſion of *ſalting with fire* ſeem ſtrange, for it is no ſtranger than that of *baptizing with fire*, which is uſed in another part of the goſpel (Matt. III. 11.) This I humbly conceive to be the true and genuin ſenſe of the former part of the text, "For every one ſhall be ſalted with fire, and "every ſacrifice ſhall be ſalted with ſalt."

Upon the mention of ſalt the evangeliſt immediately ſubjoins another ſaying of our Saviour's, though delivered by our Saviour probably upon another occaſion. There is no neceſſary conſequence in the diſcourſe. The word *ſalt* ſeemeth to be the only thing that formeth the connection. "Salt is good;" *Salt* is a metaphor in all languages ancient and modern for ſenſe and wiſdom; or for men of ſenſe and wiſdom. Thus Athens being formerly the ſeat of learning, *Attic ſalt* is a common expreſſion in the Claſſic Authors, and Athens itſelf is called *ſal gentium* the *ſalt of the nations.* Thus our Saviour calleth his diſciples (Matt. V. 13.) "the ſalt of the earth;" and St. Paul giveth this direction to Chriſtians, (Col. IV. 6.) "Let your ſpeech be always with "grace ſeaſoned with ſalt." And there is great propriety in the metaphor; for wiſdom is a very neceſſary ſeaſoning in life; there is nothing ſo inſipid as a fool. "Salt is good;" wiſdom or more particularly Chriſtian knowlege is good and valuable; or if you will underſtand it of perſons rather than of things, wiſe and knowing men are valuable. "But if the ſalt have loſt its ſaltneſs wherewith will ye ſeaſon it?" but if wiſdom degenerate into folly, and (Matt. VI. 23.) "the light that "is in" men "be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs!" or otherwiſe if wiſe men forfeit their wiſdom, and they who ſhould be teachers and inſtructors of others apoſtatize from the truth themſelves, what motives will you find ſtrong enough to reclaim them, and bring them back again into the paths of holineſs? It hath been queſtioned, whether it be poſſible for ſalt to loſe its ſaltneſs; but however that may be, our Saviour might very well ſpeak of it, as indeed he doth ſpeak of it, only as a ſuppoſition. But the fact is indubitable, as it may be ſhown from

(3) See Daubuz on the Revelation, p. 657.

ſeveral

ſeveral inſtances, and particularly from (4) Mr. Maundrell ſpeaking of the Valley of Salt near Aleppo—" You may ſee how the veins of it lie. " I broke a piece of it of which that part that was expoſed to the " rain, ſun and air, though it had the ſparks and particles of ſalt, yet " it had perfectly loſt its ſavor as in St. Matthew Chapter V. The in- " ner part which was connected to the rock, retained its ſavor, as I " found by proof." And (5) a learned commentator juſtly remarks, that " when Le Clerc and others object againſt this compariſon, or ſi- " militude, that ſalt cannot loſe its ſavor, they conſider not, that in " the boiling up of the ſaline particles of which ſalt is made, there is " left a *caput mortuum* which is inſipid." And who can ſay, that there are not ſome *capita mortua* too in the moſt learned ſocieties and profeſſions? Well therefore might our Saviour add as he doth in the following words, " Have ſalt in yourſelves and have peace one with " another;" be " wiſe as ſerpents," but be " harmleſs as doves;" in " underſtanding" be " men," but in " malice" be " children;" re- member edification, but remember charity.

Having thus largely paraphraſed and explained the text, and ſhown its coherence and agreement with the context, I proceed to make now ſome obſervations and deductions from it, which obſervations and deductions will yet ſerve farther to illuſtrate and explain it.

1. " For every one ſhall be ſalted with fire, and every ſacrifice ſhall " be ſalted with ſalt." It ſeemeth probable from this paſſage as well as from other places of ſcripture, that the fire of hell is not *metaphorical* but *real*. That wicked men, they who have lived and died hardened and impenitent, ſhall finally be puniſhed in a future ſtate according to their demerits in this life, is a principle of reaſon as well as of revelation: But of what nature, of what kind this puniſhment will be we cannot learn from reaſon; all that we can know of it muſt be derived from reve- lation. The Heathens in their conceptions of hell imagined ſuch tor- tures as the rolling ſtone and racking wheel, the gnawing vultur and laſhing furies: but the aſſertions of ſcripture are built upon ſurer foun- dations than imagination and fancy; and as often as the ſcriptures

(4) Maundrell, page the laſt.

ſpeak

ſpeak of the puniſhment of the damned, they ſpeak of it under the notion of *fire?*

It is certain that God may make his creatures happy or miſerable in ten thouſand different manners more than we can imagin, "ſuch as "eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of "man to conceive:" And it is poſſible that as the happineſs of the bleſſed is repreſented by the metaphors of a *feaſt*, a *crown*, a *kingdom* and the like; ſo *fire* may be no more than a metaphor to expreſs the miſery of the damned; and eſpecially ſince the former part of the ſentence *their worm dieth not* is confeſſedly metaphorical, the latter part *and the fire is not quenched* may be ſo too. It is poſſible that the ſcripture in this as well as in other forms of expreſſion may condeſcend to the capacities of men, chooſing to repreſent ſpiritual things by ſomething ſenſible, the torments of the next world by the moſt painful thing that we know of in this. I ſay it is poſſible that it may be ſo, but more probable that it is otherwiſe, the word *fire* being uſed ſo very often, and ſometimes uſed in ſuch a manner as if it was ſomething more than a metaphor.

You know that men will riſe again with their bodies; they therefore who ſhall be tormented will be tormented in body as well as in ſoul; and if they will ſuffer any bodily torture, why not that of *fire* as well as any other? It is called by this name throughout the New Teſtament from the beginning to the end; "hell-fire, unquenchable fire, ever-"laſting fire" in the goſpels; and the "lake of fire" and the "lake "that burneth with fire and brimſtone" in the Revelation; and not once only but many times; and a bare metaphor, it is likely, would not be repeated ſo very often. We muſt not underſtand every thing in parables too rigorouſly and according to the letter; yet it is obſervable that in the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus the puniſhment of the uncharitable Rich man is made to conſiſt (Luke XVI. 24.) in his being "tormented in the flame." But our Saviour ſpecifies this puniſhment not only in parables where he may be ſuppoſed to ſpeak more figuratively, but likewiſe in his explanation of parables where he muſt be

(5) Whitby on Luke XIV. 34.

ſuppoſed

ſuppoſed to ſpeak more plainly. Thus in his explanation of the parable of the tares, (Matt. XIII. 40, &c.) "As therefore the tares "are gathered and burnt in the fire, ſo ſhall it be in the end of this "world; The Son of man ſhall ſend forth his angels, and they "ſhall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them "which do iniquity; And ſhall caſt them into a furnace of fire, "there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth:" And thus again (Ib. 47, &c.) in his explanation of the parable of the "net that "was caſt into the ſea and gathered of every kind; which when it "was full they drew to ſhore, and ſat down, and gathered the good "into veſſels, but caſt the bad away: So ſhall it be," ſaith our Saviour, "at the end of the world; the angels ſhall come forth, and "ſever the wicked from among the juſt, and ſhall caſt them into "the furnace of fire; there ſhall be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth." Nay farther, our bleſſed Saviour in his deſcription of the day of judgment, when he paſſeth ſentence upon the wicked, ſaith (Matt. XXV. 41.) "Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire pre-"pared for the devil and his angels." A judge in pronouncing the laſt ſolemn ſentence muſt be ſuppoſed to ſpeak plainly and without a figure: and indeed in no caſe we ſhould depart from the letter of ſcripture, but where neceſſity requires it.

Theſe aſſertions are clear and ſtrong; but in the paſſage of St. Mark, that we have been explaining, our Saviour not only aſſerts but proves, not only affirms the thing, but aſſigns a reaſon. They who ſhall offend, ſaith He, "ſhall be caſt into the fire that never ſhall be quenched;" and as if this was not enough he repeats and adds, "Where their worm "dieth not and the fire is not quenched;" and this not once only, but *three* times together. (ver. 44, 46, 48.) Nay he proceeds farther; and having aſſerted that their torments will be perpetual in the flames, he aſſigns a reaſon to account how they will be perpetual, "For every "one ſhall be ſalted with fire;" that is, as we have explained it, the fire ſhall be of ſuch a nature that it ſhall *ſalt* them as it were; it ſhall not conſume, but *ſeaſon* them, and ſo make them capable of ſubſiſting for ever in everlaſting burnings. You ſee that our Saviour not only

only affirms that fire ſhall be the portion of the wicked, but condeſcends even to argue upon it; and He who ſhall be the judge of mankind certainly knoweth beſt what will be their final doom and portion. Commentators generally conceive that *their worm dieth not* is ſpoken in reference to their ſouls, and that *the fire is not quenched* relates to their bodies. Having offended both in body and ſoul, they ſhall be puniſhed in the one as well as in the other: and as the worm of guilt, the ſenſe and conſciouſneſs of their evil doings, will torment their ſouls, ſo the fire will for ever excruciate their bodies. The only difficulty is to conceive how it will be poſſible for them to ſubſiſt for ever in the fire; but this difficulty is here removed, and the thing is plainly accounted for; "for every one ſhall be ſalted "with the fire," and ſo ſeaſoned as to be for ever dying and yet never die. And certainly the ſame divine power, that made the buſh to burn with fire and yet the buſh was not conſumed, and that preſerved the three young men in the fiery furnace, can as eaſily make a conſumeable body inconſumeable, and capable of ſubſiſting for ever in everlaſting fire.

We cannot indeed define where will be the place of this fire, but that is no argument at all againſt its reality. Some imagin that the fire at the center of the earth will be the place of hell; but if there be ſuch a central fire, yet that this central fire ſhould be the place of hell ſeemeth not agreeable to that paſſage in St. Peter, (2 Pet. III. 13.) where he ſaith, that after the general conflagration and the diſſolution of the preſent heavens and earth, there will be "new hea-"vens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs." This earth therefore cannot be the place of the damned, nor the central fire the fire of hell. Others more probably ſuppoſe, that a comet or the ſun will be the place of hell. There the fire is already kindled. But the Lord of the univerſe can eaſily kindle any ſtar or planet, that it ſhall immediately become a furnace of fire for the puniſhment of rebellious creatures againſt their creator. Think on this, think what a dreadful thing it is to fall into the hands of an incenſed God; and then think (2 Pet. III. 11.) "what manner of

" perſons we ought to be in all holy converſation and godlineſs." The very thought of eternal fire is terrible; (Iſa. XXXIII. 14.) " Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? who among " us can dwell with everlaſting burnings?" Let us therefore live ſo that we may eſcape them. (Heb. XII. 28, 29.) " Let us ſerve God " with reverence and godly fear, for our God is a conſuming fire."

2. " Salt is good; but if the ſalt have loſt its ſaltneſs, where- " with will ye ſeaſon it?" From hence we may learn this melancholy truth, that how valuable ſoever wiſdom and religion are in themſelves, yet whenever wiſe and religious men abandon their principles, and act againſt all that they have formerly profeſſed, their caſe is in a manner deſperate, and it is extremely difficult, if not impoſſible, to reclaim them. (Prov. XXII. 6.) " Train up a child " in the way he ſhould go, and he will not depart from it when " he is old;" but if they depart from it, they ſeldom keep within any bounds, their " ſin is exceeding ſinful," they render their good education a curſe inſtead of a bleſſing, and are only ſo much worſe, as they know ſo much more than other people. The truth is, the faults of ſuch perſons are not ſo properly faults of their underſtanding as of their will; and theſe are always harder to be corrected than thoſe. For who ſhall pretend to adviſe them? what can you offer to their conſideration more than they know already? They have too good an opinion of themſelves, and too contemptuous a notion of others, ever to liſten to reproof, unleſs it be to laugh at it; and as the proverb ſays, (Prov. XXVI. 12.) " Seeſt thou a man wiſe in his " own conceit? there is more hope of a fool than of him."

It is a lamentable thing but it is a true thing, that the cleareſt head and the fouleſt heart do ſometimes go together. There is really a great deal of ingenuity required to be completely wicked. Men of ſuperior underſtanding and knowlege, as they have it in their power to do more good, ſo they are likewiſe capable of doing more hurt, than others of inferior abilities: and whenever they take a turn to be bad, they are very bad indeed. As Solomon was the greateſt inſtance of human wiſdom, ſo was he likewiſe of falling off

from

from it; and then how greatly was he changed from his former ſelf! He was only ſo much the more inglorious for having been before ſo renowned and glorious. When he forſook his God, his wiſdom forſook him; nor could even fooliſh Rehoboam make a more deſpicable figure than the wiſe king Solomon. The corruption of the beſt is always the worſt. When an apoſtle apoſtatizes, he turns a Judas. When an angel falls, he becomes a devil. Religion is the beſt thing in the world; but yet it may be queſtioned, whether religion hath done more good in the world, than falſe notions in religion have done harm; when immorality is ſanctified, when men are both wicked and cruel out of a principle of conſcience, and can perſecute, murder and maſſacre to do God good ſervice. (Luke XI. 35.) "Take heed therefore that the "light which is in thee be not darkneſs." "Salt is good," but let us remember, (Matt. V. 13.) that "if the ſalt have loſt its ſavor, it is "thenceforth good for nothing, but to be caſt out and to be troden "under foot of men."

3. "Have ſalt in yourſelves". This ſuppoſes that it is in every man's power to attain to a ſufficient degree of wiſdom; for our Saviour would not exact or command any thing that is impoſſible. There is a difference in men's ſouls, without doubt, in their firſt formation; ſo that ſome have naturally ſpirits as quick and active as fire, and others almoſt as ſluggiſh and heavy as lead. This difference is increaſed by the bodies in which they are placed, and the organs with which they are accommodated; for even the manner of ſetting the diamond contributes or not to its luſtre. But this original and conſtitutional difference in mens underſtandings is not ſo great as perhaps we may imagin. Men naturally are more upon an equality than is commonly conceived. The difference between them ariſeth not ſo much from what they cannot help, as from what they can; not ſo much from nature, as from education, company, different ways of life, different methods of application and the like. It is certain, that the forming of our minds depends very much upon ourſelves: And yet how many paſs their time as careleſs and thoughtleſs, as if they were ſent into the world to gape and do nothing; while others are ſo wedded to certain forms and tenets, ſo obſtinately fixed,

and ſo incorrigibly dull, that (Prov. XXVII. 22.) even " though you " ſhould bray them in a mortar among wheat with a peſtil, yet will " not their fooliſhneſs depart from them."

As this is the caſe of knowlege in general, ſo likewiſe is it of Chriſtian knowlege in particular. We live, God be thanked, in a proteſtant country where we may freely read the bible: but yet I wiſh that many do not go out of the world without ſo much as ever once reading it as they ought, or knowing any thing more of it than they hear in Churches; and it is well if they hear it there. I do not ſpeak only of the loweſt of the people whoſe labor and penury are in ſome meaſure their excuſe; but even of thoſe of higher rank and condition, whoſe eaſy fortunes free them from the drudgery of the body ſo that they may better attend to the improvement of their minds. Sins of ignorance are not ſuch ſlight things and ſo venial as we may imagin; eſpecially when our ignorance is owing to ourſelves, to our own negligence and ſupineneſs. And ignorance in this caſe is the more aggravated, the more inexcuſable, becauſe every thing that is neceſſary to be known is ſo plain and eaſy to be known, that he who runs may read it. (Eph. V. 17.) " Where- " fore be ye not unwiſe, but underſtanding what the will of the Lord " is." In the Jewiſh Law (Exod. XIII. 12, 13.) God orders the firſt-born, the male of every creature to be offered to him, but particularly excepts the firſtling of an aſs; the Holy Spirit this intimating, that he hath not any pleaſure (Eccleſ. V. 11.) " in the ſacrifice of fools."

4. and laſtly. " Have ſalt in yourſelves and have peace one with ano- " ther." This appears to carry an inſinuation, as if learning and knowlege were apt to beget a ſpirit of pride and contention; and indeed among men of parts and learning, there is not that eaſy reſignation, that dull uniformity of aſſent, which prevails in countries, where the people are purpoſely kept in ignorance, and follow their leaders as tamely and quietly as a flock of ſheep their bell-weather. In a greater range of thought there will neceſſarily be a greater diverſity of opinions; but we ſhould remember that the true uſe of knowlege is not to raiſe diſputes but to compoſe them, to reſtrain all pride and bitterneſs, to

correct

correct our ſpirits, to meliorate our tempers, to (6) ſoften our manners, nor ever ſuffer us to be fierce and ſavage; and if it hath not this effect, it only renders a man ſo much more dangerous and more intolerable. Knowlege is an excellent thing, but charity is more excellent. In reality there is more true merit in a generous, good-natured, benevolent, beneficent ſpirit, obliging to all, offenſive to none, than in all the ill-natured wit and ſatir in the world. It is more of the temper of heaven, and hath ſomething in it more engaging, more charming even upon earth. "Covet earneſtly the beſt gifts," ſaith the apoſtle, (1 Cor. XII. 31.) "and yet ſhow I unto you a more excellent way;" and *this more excellent way* is *charity*, of which he draweth a moſt amiable picture, and preferreth that divine quality to *the ſpeaking with the tongues of men and of angels*, and to *the underſtanding of all myſteries and of all knowlege*. (XIII. 1, 2.) "Though I ſpeak with the tongues "of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as ſound-"ing braſs or a tinkling cymbal; And though I have the gift of pro-"phecy, and underſtand all myſteries and all knowlege, and have no "charity, I am nothing."

Happy they who poſſeſs both qualities! Our Saviour unites them in precept, and it is a pity that they ſhould ever be ſeparated in practice. Good-nature tempers and corrects the ſharpneſs and ſeverity of wiſdom; and wiſdom quickens and inlivens the ſoftneſs and eaſineſs of good-nature. Wiſdom without good-nature is apt to be miſchievous; and good-nature without wiſdom is liable to grow contemptible. Let it be therefore our conſtant care and endevor to unite as much as we can theſe accompliſhments; good ſenſe with good manners; ſtrength of mind with ſweetneſs of temper; an able head with a tender heart; or to ſpeak in ſcripture-phraſe, the *wiſdom* of the *ſerpent* with the *harmleſneſs* of the *dove*; the *underſtanding* of *men* with the *malice* of *children*; *ſalt in ourſelves* with *peace towards all others*. And may that God who is the giver of all good gifts, and who is of infinite goodneſs, as well as of infinite wiſdom, give us ſuch a meaſure and pro-

(6) ——Ingenuas didiciſſe fideliter artes
Emollit mores, nec ſinit eſſe feros. Ovid.

portion

portion of each, ſuch wiſdom that we may be (2 Tim. III. 15.) "wiſe "unto ſalvation," and ſuch goodneſs, that we may be (Luke VI. 36.) "merciful as he is merciful."

DISSERTATION XXII.

On the Character of the PRODIGAL.

IT is ſurpriſing to conſider the force and influence of faſhion in the world; and how men are (1) like ſheep which ſingly are led or driven with difficulty, but go on eaſily in a flock together; and if a few lead the way, all the reſt will readily follow. It is certain that example is of infinitely greater weight and authority with mankind than reaſon; and ages and nations are as much diſtinguiſhed by their particular manners and faſhions as ſingle perſons. If any even the moſt incurious obſerver of things was aſked what was the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of this age and of this nation; he muſt anſwer that a ſpirit of extravagance and profuſion had poſſeſſed all ſorts of people, and reigned almoſt univerſally from the higheſt to the loweſt. There have been times remarkable for their modeſty and ſobriety, for their parſimony and integrity among ourſelves as well as among the Spartans, and in the infancy of the Roman commonwealth: but the virtues of our forefathers have died with them, the ancient frugality and ſimplicity of manners are now no more, the flood-gates of luxury and prodigality are opened, and men of all ranks and degrees live more like what they would be than what they really are. The countryman forgets his native plainneſs, and affects the modes and faſhions of the citizen; the citizen emulates the dreſs and figure and equipage of the

(1) Plutarch in the life of Cato the elder.

gentleman

gentleman of ſuperior fortune; and gentlemen delight to appear in all the pomp and parade and ſplendor of noblemen; and noblemen are vying in taſte and grandeur to outdo one another and to undo themſelves.

This is the caſe more or leſs of ſome of all ranks and degrees; and if any one ſhall be ſo prudent as to manage with the leaſt frugality and make proper proviſion for a family, he ſhall hardly eſcape the imputation of covetouſneſs, and in all probability will be branded for a narrow-ſoul'd wretch of no ſpirit, of no ſignificance. And do not ſuch inſtances of prodigality and profuſion in men of all ranks and conditions, the leaſt as well as the greateſt, loudly plead the neceſſity not only of enacting ſumptuary laws but of putting them ſtrictly in execution too? But till the voice of authority ſhall exert itſelf, let the voice of reaſon be heard and what our Saviour ſays (Luke XV.) in the parable of the prodigal ſon. We think that we cannot more effectually expoſe the miſchief and folly of prodigality than by taking a ſurvey of the character of the prodigal, as it is drawn in that parable. For we ſhall ſee there 1ſt the principal motives and inducements to this vice, 2dly its uſual concomitants and attendents, 3dly its dreadful effects and conſequences, 4thly the final iſſue and concluſion of all, repentance. At the ſame time we cannot but obſerve what a finiſhed character our Saviour hath drawn in few words, and how well he muſt have underſtood the world and mankind, (John II. 25.) " and needed not that any " ſhould teſtify of man for he knew what was in man."

I. Let us conſider what are the principal *motives* and *inducements* to prodigality and extravagance. What led the prodigal in the parable firſt into this courſe ſeemeth to have been his youth and inexperience. " A certain man had two ſons;" (ver. 11.) and he was the *younger* who was the prodigal; the *elder* was more ſober and regular, and could ſay to his father, (ver. 29.) " Lo theſe many years do I " ſerve thee, neither tranſgreſſed I at any time thy commandment." And generally young men like young plants are apteſt to grow wild and luxuriant. Their warm conſtitution and hot blood prompt them to many things, which their cooler reaſon and maturer judgment would con-

condemn. Their inexperience in the ways of the world betrays them the more eaſily into its ſnares. The more they know of its vanities, the more they will learn to deſpiſe them. As men advance in years, we may obſerve that they commonly grow more frugal; or if they continue expenſive afterwards, yet the habit was firſt contracted when they were young and heedleſs. The royal preacher therefore with great propriety addreſſeth his diſcourſe to the young man in particular, (Eccleſ. XI. 9.) "Rejoice O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart chear "thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart "and in the ſight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all theſe "things God will bring thee into judgment."

But it was not his youth and inexperience alone that led the prodigal in the parable into this courſe of life, for God forbid that every young gentleman of fortune ſhould be idle and extravagant; but he ſeemeth moreover to have been actuated by great vanity; he was for withdrawing himſelf from under his father's eye and obſervation; he fancied that he could manage as well without his ſuperintendency and direction; he was for becoming independent and ſetting up for himſelf; "Father," ſays he, (ver. 12.) "give me the portion of goods that "falleth to me." And indeed there is no rock upon which youth more frequently and more fatally make ſhipwrack, than this vain deſire and affectation of being men too ſoon, men in extravagance, men in licentiouſneſs, for there is no danger of their being too ſoon men in underſtanding. But vanity is not peculiar to youth, and vanity in one ſhape or other is the general motive to prodigality; and ſo many expend ſo much more than they can afford for no other reaſon, but that they may be thought richer or greater or ſome way or other more conſiderable than they are in reality. How many purchaſe books without ever reading them, and pictures without ever underſtanding them, only for the name of having a fine collection? How many in their houſes, their furniture, their tables, their equipage, exceed their proportion, and hurt their fortunes, not for the ſake of any real pleaſure that they enjoy above others, but merely for the reputation of that fantaſtic thing which they call a *taſte*? In moſt things men conſult appearance and oſtentation more

than

than uſe and convenience; and their happineſs conſiſts not ſo much in their own enjoyment as in the opinion of others.

But the prodigal in the parable had other means of conſuming his ſubſtance beſides his vanity, for he was alſo fond of foreign countries and foreign faſhions. "He gathered all together, and took his jour-"ney into a far country," (ver. 13.) which led him into ſo much expenſe. And the money that ſome of our young travelers draw out of the nation, and the little good that they bring into it again, are perhaps hardly conceivable but by perſons who have had opportunities of ſeeing and knowing it. It is to be wiſhed, that the (2) project of a famous politician was put in practice, and there were cenſors appointed to whom our youth ſhould be obliged to give an exact account of their travels in writing upon their return to their native country. As things are at preſent, our countrymen are noted for little more than their irregularity and extravagance in foreign parts; and we do not often find that they leave their follies and their vices behind them, but oftener bring them home with improvement and addition. We are all of us indeed too fond of novelty, and encourage foreign faſhions and foreign manufactures to the diſcouragement of our own. There is one nation particularly whereof we are moſt humble imitators, without conſidering how much it coſts us and how little it becomes us. But if we would imitate them in any thing, it would be well if we would imitate them in the wiſeſt part of their character, in their oeconomy and frugality, their great affection for their own country, and their little eſteem of all others in compariſon, their exporting as many as they can of their own commodities for the uſe of other nations, and importing as few as they can of the products of other nations for their own conſumption.

II. We have ſeen what are the principal motives and inducements to extravagance, and let us now in the next place conſider what are its uſual *concomitants* and *attendents*, and obſerve how the prodigal behaved in the highth of his prodigality. It is ſaid (ver. 13.) that "he "waſted his ſubſtance with riotous living," and afterwards (ver. 30.)

(2) Harrington.

"that he devoured his living with harlots." And it ſeemeth almoſt as impoſſible to ſpend, as it is in the ordinary courſe of affairs to get, a great eſtate in a ſhort time with innocence. Some vice or other always attends extravagance; as perhaps the money is expended in pride, or thrown away at play, or conſumed in eating or drinking, though drinking doth not ſeem to be the reigning vice of this age; it hath deſcended much from high to low life, and the faſhionable exceſs in theſe days is rather luxury in eating. But the plaineſt diet is the moſt wholeſome as well as the moſt agreeable to nature, and they muſt be brutiſh indeed who (3) live that they may eat and drink; men ſhould only eat and drink that they may live. Or perhaps they are expenſive in their pleaſures, and like the prodigal in the parable devour their living with harlots, than which no vice more certainly ruins the eſtate, deſtroys the body, and damns the ſoul; for (whatever our fine gentlemen may think) "whoremongers and adulterers God will judge," ſays the apoſtle; (Heb. XIII. 4.) and in another place, (Eph. V. 5.) "No whoremonger nor unclean perſon hath any inheritance in the kingdom of "Chriſt and of God." Or perhaps all theſe vices go hand in hand together, as it is not unuſual for the fop, the gameſter, the epicure, the drunkard and the whoremonger to be all united in one and the ſame character.

At the ſame time extravagance hinders a man from diſcharging his duty in other reſpects; and he is guilty of ſins of omiſſion as well as of commiſſion. His expenſes are ſuch continual drains and draw ſo much from him, that the ſpring of charity is dried up: He can ſpare nothing from his own ſuperfluities to relieve the neceſſities of others. He liveth as if he was born for himſelf alone, hath ſo little feeling for others that he doth not ſo much as provide for thoſe of his own houſehold, and in this reſpect (1 Tim. V. 8.) "is worſe than an infidel."

Extravagance not only hinders a man from doing good, but often puts him upon doing ill, upon mean and unworthy actions, oppreſſing his neighbours, racking his tenants, running in debt and never paying or paying with difficulty, injuring his family, robbing his children, be-

(3) Socrates in Plutarch's treatiſe of hearing the poets.

traying

traying his truſts, and trying any expedient to ſupply his preſent exigencies and occaſions. In ſhort an extravagant man can never make a good huſband, or a good father, or a good ſon; and to complete his character, he is as deficient in his duty to God as to men, and you ſhall ſeldom obſerve in any one a ſpirit of extravagance and profuſion, but it is attended with a ſpirit of profaneneſs and irreligion.

III. If ſuch are the concomitants and attendents of this vice it is eaſy to gueſs how dreadful muſt be the *effects and conſequences*. Let us obſerve how it fared with the prodigal in the parable. "When he had "ſpent all, (ver. 14.) there aroſe a mighty famine in that land." Providence is often pleaſed to interpoſe, and ſome ſignal calamity overtakes the profuſe and profligate, and accelerates their ruin. God can never proſper extravagance, the waſting and conſuming of his talents. Nothing is more odious in his ſight than ſuch inſtances of miſapplied wealth, a thing that is capable of doing ſo much good perverted to ſo much harm: And indeed it is but juſt and fitting that they, who thus abuſe God's mercies, ſhould ſmart under his judgments.

But if no extraordinary judgment ſhould befall them, yet the natural and ordinary effects of their extravagance is puniſhment ſufficient, and no effect is more natural and ordinary than its reducing them to want and neceſſity. When the prodigal in the parable "had ſpent all, "he began to be in want." He would deny himſelf nothing as long as his money laſted; but when that was gone, then he began to know what it was to want. There is no need of the ſpirit of prophecy to foreſee, that a continued courſe of extravagance muſt either a little ſooner or a little later conclude in beggary and ruin. How dreadful then muſt be the change of the ſcene? how little able are they, who have lived in eaſe and affluence, to ſtruggle with difficulties and indigence? and to what wretched ſhifts, to what a miſerable condition are they frequently reduced, ſome to ſtarve, ſome to beg, ſome to fly their native country, ſome to languiſh in priſon, and ſome by violent means to put an end to themſelves to put an end to their miſery? The prodigal in the parable was in all appearance a ſingle man, ſo that himſelf only ſuffered for his own miſconduct: but many involve their families

in difficulties and troubles on their account, keep them needy while they live, and leave them entirely deſtitute when they die, unleſs perhaps the wiſdom of their anceſtors hath tied up their hands, and made ſome ſettlement, ſome proviſion for poſterity.

As extravagance occaſions want, ſo want occaſions ſervility and dependence. We ſee the prodigal in the parable, when he had ſpent all and was now grown neceſſitous, (ver. 15.) " went and joined himſelf " to a citizen of that country," and ſubmitted to be as a ſervant when he might have commanded as a maſter. But vanity and profuſion will bring down even the greateſt to make the meaneſt ſubmiſſions. Let your fortune be what it will, if you live above yourſelf, you muſt come in time to live below yourſelf. There is no preſerving your integrity, and living free and independent, without living within your income. The man who can thus proportion and moderate his expenſes is ſuperior to all temptations, and wanting nothing nothing can corrupt him: but whoever liveth above his fortune, and maketh himſelf neceſſitous, maketh himſelf dependent, and can no longer aſſert his freedom, but muſt ſell his birthright and perhaps ſell himſelf. And when a man is once become corrupt and venal, he is fit for any dirty work, as the prodigal in the parable was " ſent into the fields to feed ſwine." When a Roman Conſul could make a ſupper of turnips roaſted with his own hands, it was in vain for the enemy to attempt to bribe him from his duty; his poverty was magnificence, and his frugality was riches: but had he lived in all the politeneſs and luxury of ſucceeding ages, he would hardly have exerted that ſtubborn uncomplying virtue; had the expenſes of his table and equipage rendered him neceſſitous, his neceſſity would in all probability have rendered him corrupt, and he would have preferred gold to duty, private intereſt to public ſpirit, and the patriot with oeconomy and frugality would have been with prodigality and profuſeneſs the betrayer and feller of his country.

But we may obſerve that this courſe of life is rarely known to proſper. A man is ſcarce ever the richer for the wages of iniquity. The curſe of God is in the houſe of corruption. The money that is ill gotten is commonly as ill ſpent; and the man is always neceſſitous, and

and no ſooner is extricated out of one difficulty but preſently he is involved in another. We do not find that the prodigal in the parable at all mended his condition by his mean ſervitude, he was in want before, and he was in want ſtill; for (ver. 16.) "he would fain have "filled his belly with the huſks that the ſwine did eat, and no man "gave unto him." It was a farther aggravation to his misfortunes that *no man gave unto him*; but ſuch is the uſual fate of the prodigal, that his friends and his fortune forſake him both together, and how much ſoever he hath ſquandered away upon others in his proſperity, yet few or none are inclined to compaſſionate and relieve him in his adverſity. Even they, who make their advantage of his profuſion, ſecretly deſpiſe him for it, and upon any reduction of his affairs are perhaps the firſt to diſtreſs him. The world is not over apt to commiſerate thoſe who come to misfortunes which they could neither foreſee nor prevent; and ſurely he merits much leſs of our pity and regard, who ruins himſelf knowingly, and is undone merely by his own fault. The generality of mankind, inſtead of pitying him, will rather remember his former inſolent behaviour, and think he is well requited. His very relations ſoon grow weary of relieving and aſſiſting a man, who will run through every thing; and there is no remedy but he muſt live in neceſſity and contempt, the ſcorn of his enemies and the ſhame of his friends.

IV. It is no wonder, when ſuch are the effects and conſequences of this vice, that the final iſſue and concluſion of all is *repentance*. There is no merit in it, for a man cannot help being ſorry when he hath plunged himſelf into ſtraits and difficulties; and the remembrance of his former gayety and ſplendor is ſo far from being any comfort to him, that it greatly aggravates his preſent misfortunes. But the worſt of it is, this repentance is ſeldom perfect repentance and reformation. It is "the "ſorrow of the world," (2 Cor. VII. 10.) and not "a godly ſorrow "that worketh repentance not to be repented of." For deliver ſome perſons out of their diſtreſs, and they will immediately return to their old courſes; pay their debts, and they will run in debt again. Some again know no way of forſaking their extravagance, but by paſſing into

into the other extreme of covetouſneſs; and nothing is more common than to ſee the young ſpendthrift grow up into an old miſer. Others, who would really take up and reform, perceive at laſt their affairs gone too far to be ever retrieved; and like Eſau, after he had parted with his birthright, (Heb. XII. 17.) "find no place of "repentance, though they ſeek it carefully with tears."

Happy was it for the prodigal in the parable, that he reformed in time, and had a kind father yet living to receive him. "When he "came to himſelf," ſays the parable, (ver. 17.) as if he had been out of his ſenſes before, and his former courſe of life had been a ſpecies of madneſs. "When he came to himſelf he ſaid, How "many hired ſervants of my father's have bread enough and to "ſpare, and I periſh with hunger!" The firſt ſtep of his amendment you ſee was conſideration, and conſideration produceth virtuous reſolutions, (ver. 18, 19.) "I will ariſe and go to my father "and will ſay unto him Father I have ſinned againſt heaven and "before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy ſon." Virtuous reſolutions produce virtuous actions; (ver. 20.) "And he aroſe "and came to his father." The behaviour of his father is deſigned to repreſent unto us the affection of our Father who is in heaven. For "when he was yet a great way off, his father ſaw him, and "had compaſſion, and ran and fell on his neck and kiſſed him." How exquiſite, how tender is this! but the recovery of his ſon from a courſe of extravagance and vice, was like receiving him from the dead; (ver. 24.) "For this my ſon was dead and is live again; he "was loſt and is found."

We may properly make two or three inferences from the foregoing diſcourſe, and thoſe we ſhall endevor to diſpatch in as few words as poſſible.

1. You ſee what an admirable character our Saviour hath drawn of the prodigal in all ſtages and degrees from his firſt motives and inducements to his final repentance and reformation. So ſhort and at the ſame time ſo complete a character you cannot find exemplified in any other author. Short as it is, it comprehends almoſt every thing

that

that can be ſaid or thought upon the ſubject. Learn from hence a due reverence and eſteem of the ſcriptures. Peruſe them often. Often meditate upon them. And the more you read and underſtand, the more you will admire and value them.

2. You ſee the folly, the wickedneſs, the miſchief of a life of prodigality and extravagance; how abſurd the motives and inducements, how ſinful the concomitants and attendents, how ruinous the effects and conſequences. Learn from hence to practiſe the great and neceſſary virtue of oeconomy and frugality. Be modeſt. Be ſober. Be diligent. Be temperate. Refrain your appetites. Regulate your expenſes. Live within your fortune. Scorn to run in debt. And as the apoſtle ſays, (Rom. XIII. 8.) "Owe no man "any thing but to love one another."

3dly. Let us, before we conclude, conſider a little more particularly, and compare the character of theſe times, the character of this nation, with that of the prodigal. We obſerved in the opening of this diſcourſe, that the diſtinguiſhing and reigning vice of this age was extravagance and profuſion; and as it betrayed the prodigal, ſo it hath led us into all manner of ſin and wickedneſs. One of the leaſt faults of this age, which would be eſteemed a very great one in any other, is that immoderate love of pleaſure, which is viſible in all ranks and degrees among us, in the old as well as the young, in the women as much as the men. The whole buſineſs of their lives is pleaſure; and never was ſo much time as well as money expended in public diverſions, never was ſuch a number and variety of public entertainments, and all of them full, all of them crowded. Formerly they partook of pleaſures ſometimes, at convenient ſeaſons; but now they live in them, and cannot live without them. Formerly they diverted themſelves a little after the buſineſs and fatigue of the day; but now they have diverſions from morning till night, and all the night; and indeed when they begin in the morning, they muſt be fit for nothing elſe all the day. It would be well if they were all innocent pleaſures and diverſions, though they cannot be innocent which conſume ſo much time, which

expend

expend ſo much money: but our people are now grown as fond of gaming as of pleaſure, or rather gaming is their greateſt pleaſure. There is ſcarce any ſuch thing, as meeting to ſpend any time in ingenious or entertaining or improving converſation: but all companies engage more or leſs in play; children themſelves are trained up to it, and they never depart from it when they are old; and though the ſtricteſt laws are enacted againſt gaming, yet ſome of the legiſlators themſelves are the firſt to break the laws, and ſet a moſt pernicious example to others. And what wonder then that in every other inſtance there is that corruption of morals, that relaxation of diſciplin, that neglect of all order and government, that contempt of all virtue and religion, as if there was no king, or no God that ruled over men? We are truly "lovers of pleaſure more than lovers "of God;" for how thin are our churches, while play-houſes and public gardens are crowded? How few obſerve the ſabbath, or bear to dedicate even one day in ſeven to pious meditations? How many never obſerve it at all, and have their parties at play on that day as well as all the reſt of the week? How is all family devotion ſlighted and neglected as well as the public worſhip of God in the congregation? How have ſome of the moſt ſolemn offices in the liturgy been ridiculed, the word of God itſelf been perverted and abuſed, and infidelity and blaſphemy not only been vended in ſecret, but publiſhed with impunity, and received with applauſe and approbation. "And ſhall not God viſit for theſe things? ſhall not his ſoul be "avenged on ſuch a nation as this?" There is but one way to prevent or avert his judgments, and that is by repentance. Let us reſemble the prodigal in this, as much as we do in other particulars. Let us return and repent like him, and like him we ſhall be received and forgiven. "For as I live, ſaith the Lord God, I have no plea-"ſure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from "his way and live."

DIS-

DISSERTATION XXIII.

Againſt LUXURY.

EXTRAVAGANCE and luxury are two of the great reigning vices of this age and of this nation: and as the miſchievous effects of extravagance are fully ſet forth in the character of the Prodigal; ſo the fatal end of its ſiſter ſin *luxury* cannot be more truly repreſented than in the caſe of the Rich man in the parable, (Luke XVI.) who from the highth of ſplendor and happineſs was caſt down to the depth of torment and miſery. He was (ver. 19.) "cloathed "in purple and fine linen and fared ſumptuouſly every day;" but now by a ſad reverſe of things he was "tormented" in the "flames," and wanted even "a drop of water to cool his tongue." Being in torments, he deſired, as it was natural, a little reſpite and relief from them; but even this he cannot obtain. And what had he done ſo hainous as to deſerve this terrible puniſhment? The only crime here alleged againſt him is his *luxury*. He is not charged with acquiring or increaſing his eſtate by extortion and injuſtice; he is not accuſed of doing any evil with his money, but only of living at eaſe and in affluence, and doing no good; (ver. 25.) "Son remember, that "thou in thy life time receiveſt thy good things, and therefore now "thou art tormented." And is not this enough to ſtartle and alarm all thoſe, who ſpend their wealth and their days in luxury and pleaſure; as if they were born only for themſelves, and had none other buſineſs and concern in life but their own gratification and indulgence.

As ſome virtues, ſo ſome vices are more peculiar to one ſtate and condition of life than to another; but it is the excellence of the preſent age, to be able to reconcile inconſiſtencies, and to make the

vices, which are proper to ſome, common to all. Luxury, one would imagin, was a vice incident only to a great and ample fortune; a ſin of too high a price for any of inferior quality; a crime above the purchaſe and expenſe of the generality of mankind: but ſuch is the aſpiring genius of the preſent age, that the meaneſt are willing to emulate the greateſt; the diſeaſe is become epidemical, hath infected ſome of all ranks and degrees, the court and the camp, the city and the country, and ſpread itſelf even to the horns of the altar. And where it may ſtop, or what may be the conſequence, God only knoweth; but the natural tendency of things is enough to make the ſtouteſt and moſt ſanguin of us all to tremble, notwithſtanding the faſhionable plea that *private vices* are *public benefits*.

All who have any regard for themſelves, or their families, or their country, ſhould unite heartily againſt the common enemy. At leaſt it cannot miſbecome a miniſter of the goſpel, who wiſheth well to virtue and wiſheth well to his country, to contribute all he can to ſtop the progreſs of this growing evil, which like a mighty torrent is pouring in upon us; and if not oppoſed in time, will overwhelm and deluge all. What luxury is, I preſume, there is no neceſſity to define or explain. Every one ſufficiently underſtands, that it is living and enjoying the good things of life above our rank and proportion, which any man may be guilty of in the loweſt ſphere as well as in the higheſt, and moſt men are guilty of in ſome degree or other. Without aggravating matters, there is hardly any vice of more pernicious conſequence in all reſpects; as will evidently appear, whether we conſider it 1ſt with regard to a *man's ſelf*, or 2dly with regard to *ſociety*, or 3dly and laſtly with regard to *God and religion*.

I. Let us conſider the effects of luxury with regard to *a man's ſelf*; and we ſhall find it equally pernicious to his mind, and body, and eſtate. A life of eaſe and luxury is certainly not the way to improve but impair the faculties of the mind. Wiſdom is to be acquired only by temperance and diſciplin; and men of pleaſure will hardly ſubmit to the pains which are neceſſary to learn it. They live in a continual diſſipation and diſtraction of mind; and though ſometimes their thoughts may

may be bright, yet they are, like the ſun-beams glittering upon the water, bright and broken. Their parts may be ever ſo quick and ready naturally, but like all other things they will be worſe for want of proper exerciſe. As the underſtanding groweth weaker, ſo the paſſions grow ſtronger by luxury and indulgence, like fruits and plants by a hot-bed in gardening. Such perſons are uſed ſo to humor and indulge themſelves, that they expect to be humored and indulged as much by others. The ſtream and current of their affections is not to be ſtopped or oppoſed; and if at any time they are oppoſed, then like waters ſtopped in their paſſage, they rage and foam and lift up their waves. It is no unuſual thing for a man by pride and luxury to be changed like Nebuchadnezzar into a beaſt.

Is not this argument enough againſt luxury, that at the ſame time that it weakens and depraves the underſtanding, it ſtrengthens and inflames the paſſions? But it is as bad for the body as for the mind, and is no leſs an enemy to the health of the one than to the improvement of the other. It is attended with a whole train of diſeaſes, to which temperance and abſtinence are in great meaſure ſtrangers; and in youth treaſures up pains and aches for old age. Not that many who lead a luxurious diſſolute life ever arrive at old age; they generally drop off the tree before their time, and are no ſooner ripe than they are rotten. Such perſons are commonly ſaid, and not improperly ſaid, to live *too faſt*; and are old even while they are young. At beſt there is not that free circulation and eaſy digeſtion, there are not thoſe chearful and lightſome ſpirits, there is not that ſound and quiet ſleep, that vigor and vivacity in youth, that mellowneſs and agreeableneſs in age, which are the natural and genuin effects of temperance and exerciſe. We ſee by daily experience, as well as read in ſacred hiſtory, that in the lap of *Dalilah* even *a Sampſon* will loſe his ſtrength. And it behoveth us to conſider, whether the frequency of gout, ſtone, palſy, dropſy, and madneſs itſelf, which of late years is obſerved to have ſpread very much among us, be not originally owing to luxury and high living.

Would not any reaſonable man therefore avoid luxury as he regards his health? But it is as bad for the eſtate as for the body, waſtes and

conſumes the one as it weakens and enervates the other. It is of all vices the moſt chargeable. A little eſtate muſt ſoon ſink under the weight of it, for even the greateſt cannot bear the burden; as we ſee plainly by the many inſtances of ancient and noble families, which have been reduced by it to want and to nothing. The acquiſitions of ages have been ſpent in a few years; and few can fall like Job from abundance to want, and yet like Job preſerve their temper. Their minds are generally ſo ſoftened, and their bodies ſo weakened and enervated by their former indolence and plenty, that of all people they are leaſt able to ſtruggle with difficulties. The expenſe of luxury is certain, and what are the gains? As it is infallibly the way to ſpend an eſtate, ſo it is never the way to get any. This muſt be the effect of "riſing up early" and "late taking reſt," and "eating the bread of careſulneſs:" but "the drunkard and the glutton," as Solomon expreſſeth it, (Prov. XXIII. 21.) "ſhall come to poverty, and drowſineſs ſhall cloath a "man with rags." In any ſtation, in any buſineſs, in any profeſſion it is impoſſible for a man ever to grow illuſtrious, or achieve any thing great and noble, as long as he abandons himſelf to his eaſe and his pleaſure. The greateſt ſcholars, the greateſt lawgivers, the greateſt heroes, have been the moſt laborious, or they would not have been the moſt uſeful, in their generation. Hercules would never have been made immortal, if according to the fable he had preferred the flowery paths of pleaſure, and had not choſen the ſteep and toilſome road of virtue. So far is this vice from aggrandizing the meaneſt, that it will even debaſe the greateſt. The feaſts and luxury of Perſia could intoxicate an Alexander. The pleaſures and ſoftneſs of Campania could overcome an Hannibal. And Sampſon, if he had never been a ſlave to his pleaſures, would never have been a ſlave to his enemies. He was blinded by his paſſions, before his eyes were put out by the Philiſtines.

II. Such are the fatal effects of this vice with regard to a *man's ſelf*; but the pernicious conſequences of it will farther appear by conſidering it 2dly with regard to *ſociety*; and we ſhall find it as great an enemy to ſocieties as to ſingle perſons. It unqualifies men for every ſtation and employment; diſables them from performing the duties of public

public or private life; renders them equally unfit to govern or obey; living all for themſelves and doing nothing for others, like drones in a hive draining the combs of their honey and never making any of their own. It cloſeth the heart and ſhutteth the hand to acts of benevolence and kindneſs, taketh away from men the inclination to do good as well as putteth it out of their power to do it. They are ſo eaſy and happy in themſelves, that they have no commiſeration, no notion almoſt of the wants and ſufferings of others; and for this reaſon the prophet denounceth woe unto them; (Amos VI. 1, &c.) "Woe to "them that are at eaſe in Zion, and are named chief of the nations; "that put far away the evil day, and cauſe the ſeat of violence to come "near; that lie upon beds of ivory, and ſtretch themſelves upon their "couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock and the calves out of "the midſt of the ſtall; that chant to the ſound of the viol, and in"vent to themſelves inſtruments of muſic; that drink wine in bowls, "and anoint themſelves with the chief ointments, but they are not "grieved for the affliction of Joſeph." In the parable the rich man, "who was cloathed in purple and fine linen and fared ſumptuouſly "every day," had yet no pity, no regard for poor Lazarus, who was "laid at his gate full of ſores and deſiring to be fed with the crumbs "which fell from his table." The money that ſhould be beſtowed in charity luxury diverts to other purpoſes; conſumes in dreſs and equipage, expends on dogs and horſes what ſhould cloath the naked, feed the hungry, comfort the diſtreſſed and ſet the priſoner free; ſo that while ſome are almoſt tired and ſurfeited with ſuperfluities, others are ſtarving and dying for want of neceſſaries. Nor is this all. It not only hinders men from doing good, but naturally prepares and diſpoſes them to do ill; putteth them upon projects which otherwiſe they would not be guilty of, to ſupply their expenſes; grinding and oppreſſing their tenants, detaining poor tradeſmen without their money, running in debt and defrauding their creditors, with other meanneſſes unworthy of a Gentleman, merely that they may ſupport their vanity and extravagance. It is likewiſe great injuſtice to a family, diſſipates their preſent

ſent poſſeſſions if not invades their future reverſions, and frequently entails diſeaſes and miſery on innocent poſterity.

Wherever too there is a ſpirit of luxury in a people, there is always a ſpirit of venality and corruption. Their liberties are not half ſo dear to them as their pleaſures. Public ſpirit is a jeſt. Their own private intereſt is all in all. They will ſooner ſell themſelves than take up their croſs and deny themſelves. Eſau will part with his birthright rather than not have the pottage that he deſires. And when a people are in ſuch a caſe, their ſpirits ſo weakened and their manners ſo corrupted, what are they then but *homines ad ſervitutem parati*, men ripe for ſlavery, and prepared to fall an eaſy prey to the firſt domeſtic or foreign enemy, rich enough to bribe or powerful enough to invade them? And in fact we may obſerve that luxury hath been the ruin of the greateſt ſtates and kingdoms, as frugality temperance virtue have been the riſe of the leaſt and loweſt. What a brave hardy people were the Perſians under Cyrus? but under Darius, that is in the ſpace of little more than two hundred years, they were grown ſo ſoft and effeminate, that there was no need of an Alexander to ſubdue them. A leſs formidable enemy would have ſufficed for ſuch a conqueſt. As long as the Athenians and Spartans continued in the inſtitutions of Solon and Lycurgus, as long as they were a frugal and temperate, they were a great and free people; but when luxury flowed in upon them, then ruin flowed in upon them, and they became tributaries with the reſt of Greece. And was not the caſe the ſame with the maſters of the world, the Romans? While they preſerved their virtue, they maintained their grandeur, and their liberty and their empire might have been immortal, if the ſame ſpirit which had poſſeſſed the firſt ages had actuated the laſt. But the loſs of virtue was followed by the loſs of liberty, and the loſs of liberty by the loſs of empire. Luxury (1) did more than the arms of all their enemies, and revenged the conquered world; firſt made them ſlaves to the arbitrary will of their own citizens, and then yielded them up a prey to foreign enemies. God forbid that the fate of the people

(1) ——————————Sævior armis
Luxuria incubuit, victumque ulciſcitur orbem. Juvenal.

of Rome ſhould ever be the fate of the people of Britain! We reſemble them too much in their manners, but may we never reſemble them in their fall. This however muſt be ſaid, that luxury is worſe and more unnatural in us than in moſt other nations; for moſt other nations have the means of luxury more within themſelves and more of their own growth, whereas ours are all of foreign growth, are all imported, which is turning our very trade into our ruin, and making "the things "which ſhould have been for our wealth an occaſion of falling."

III. Such are the fatal effects of this vice with regard to *ſociety*, but the pernicious influence of it will ſtill farther appear by conſidering it 3dly and laſtly with regard to *God and religion*; and we ſhall conſtantly find it, if not to begin in irreligion, yet at leaſt to tend and end there. Nothing contributeth more to the debauching of mens morals, and the baniſhing of all virtue and religion, and even the appearances of virtue and religion, from among us. Nothing is more contrary to the Chriſtian ſcheme of mortification and ſelf-denial, expoſeth men to more temptations, and layeth them more open to the aſſaults of their ſpiritual enemies. They are ſo devoted to the pleaſures and amuſements of this life, that they have little leiſure and leſs inclination to think of the everlaſting concerns of the next. They are ſo taken up with enjoying the good things of the world, that they ſeldom or never reflect on the great author and beſtower of them. Their pleaſure is their god, and time with them is more than eternity. What renders their caſe more deſperate is, that they are above all advice, and ſcorn to liſten to the moſt wholſome reproof. Some ſignal affliction only can awaken them out of their ſpiritual lethargy to a ſenſe of their duty. They muſt be made to ſmart, that they may be made to feel. The prodigal ſon, (Luke XV.) who "waſted his ſubſtance with riotous "living," was in extremity of want, before ever "he came to him-"ſelf," or had a thought of returning to his father and ſaying, "Fa-"ther I have ſinned againſt heaven and before thee, and am no more "worthy to be called thy ſon." As long as they live in eaſe and delicacy, what care they for religion? They who enjoy moſt gifts, are commonly leaſt thankful to the giver. They may live independent of the

the world and they would live independent of God too. God hath done the moſt for their honor, and they do the leaſt again for God's honor; never ſanctify his ſabbaths, never frequent his ſanctuaries, but leave religion as a thing below their notice to the poor and the vulgar; as if the ſame ſcene was to be continued always, as if God could not eaſily change it and puniſh them for their neglect of him here, as well as call them to a ſevere account for it hereafter.

It is not expreſſed indeed, but it is intimated, that the rich man in the parable, "who was cloathed in purple and fine linnen and "fared ſumptuouſly every day," was as looſe in his faith as he was luxurious in his life, believed little or nothing of revealed religion, "heard not Moſes and the Prophets;" at leaſt his five brethren did not, who lived in the ſame gaiety and ſplendor; and therefore he deſired that one might be ſent from the dead, "to teſtify unto "them, leſt they alſo come into this place of torment." It was luxury that perverted the heart of Solomon to ſtrange women and ſtrange gods. And who then can be certain that he ſhall be proof againſt its charms? who can preſume that he ſhall be wiſer than the wiſeſt?

It is a hainous crime, as it is pernicious to men, whether private perſons or public ſocieties: but the crime is greatly aggravated, as it is ſo deſtructive of all faith and religion; and therefore there are ſuch vehement, ſuch repeated declarations made againſt it in ſcripture. "Woe unto them," ſays the prophet Iſaiah, (Iſa. V. 11, 12.) "that continue until night till wine inflame them; and the "harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their "feaſts, but they regard not the work of the Lord, neither con-"ſider the operation of his hands." Woe unto you that are rich, "for ye have received your conſolation; Woe unto you that are "full, for ye ſhall hunger; Woe unto you that laugh now for ye "ſhall mourn and weep," ſays our Saviour himſelf. (Luke VI. 24, 25.) And St. James ſpeaketh with great earneſtneſs, (James V. 1, &c.) "Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl for your miſeries "that ſhall come upon you; ye have lived in pleaſure on the earth

"and

" and been wanton, ye have nouriſhed your hearts as in a day of " ſlaughter; ye have condemned and killed the juſt: crucified the " Son of God afreſh and put him to an open ſhame."

For *God's* ſake therefore, for our *country's* ſake, for *our own* ſake, let us be ſober, frugal and temperate in all things. Oh! never may that reflection, ſo ſoft and yet ſo cutting, be applicable to any one of us; " Son remember that thou in thy life time receiveſt thy " good things." The love of ourſelves, that maketh us to cheriſh and indulge ourſelves, rightly underſtood would conſtrain us to be temperate.

Temperance will aſſiſt our thoughts and refine our underſtandings, reſtrain our unruly appetites and paſſions and keep all ſerene and calm within; will preſerve health and nouriſh chearfulneſs, prevent ſickneſs and ſtarve away pain; will improve our eſtate or at leaſt never impair it, advance our credit and reputation, and diſpoſe us to its kindred virtues, frugality, induſtry, and every thing that will make us greater or wiſer or better.

Temperance will promote the happineſs of *ſocieties* as well as of *ſingle perſons*; will qualify men better for the diſcharge of their duties in their ſeveral ſtations and callings; will enable them to be more punctual in their dealings, more juſt to their families, more generous to their dependents, more charitable to the poor; will confirm the loyalty and integrity of a people, encourage a ſpirit of freedom and independency, and render a nation great at home and glorious abroad.

Temperance, as it is beneficial to *men*, is likewiſe pleaſing to *God*; is more particularly the duty of a Chriſtian and the ſupport of all Chriſtian graces; a friend to every virtue and a foe to every vice; will bleſs us with contentment in this world, and crown us with everlaſting happineſs in the world to come.

" I beſeech you therefore, (1 Pet. II. 11.) as ſtrangers and pilgrims " abſtain from *luxury* which warreth againſt the ſoul." " Every " man that ſtriveth for the maſtery (1 Cor. IX. 25.) is temperate in " all things; now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but

" we an incorruptible." I will conclude all with that pathetical exhortation of Moſes to the Iſraelites, ſo very applicable to the people of this nation: (Deut. VIII. 11, &c.) " Beware leſt when thou " haſt eaten and art full, and haſt built goodly houſes and dwelt " therein, and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy " ſilver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou haſt is mul- " tiplied; then thine heart be lifted up, and thou forget the Lord " thy God" who hath done all theſe things for thee; " and thou " ſay in thine heart My power and the might of my hand hath gotten " me this wealth; but thou ſhalt remember the Lord thy God, for it " is he that giveth thee power to get wealth; and it ſhall be, if thou " do at all forget the Lord thy God, I teſtify againſt you this day, " that ye ſhall ſurely periſh; becauſe ye would not be obedient to the " name of the Lord your God."

DISSERTATION XXIV.

On our SAVIOUR'S Diſcourſe with the Woman of Samaria.

PART THE FIRST.

OUR Saviour leaving Judea and going into Galilee muſt needs paſs through Samaria, that country lying between Judea and Galilee. In his way he cometh to Sichem or Sichar, a city of Samaria; and being weary with his journey ſitteth down by a well, which was called Jacob's well, and perhaps might be digged or at leaſt was frequented by that patriarch. As he was ſitting there, his diſciples being gone into the city to buy meat, (John IV. 7.) " there cometh a woman of " Samaria

" Samaria to draw water;" a woman not of the city of Samaria, but of the country of Samaria, and of the city of Sichar beforementioned; " and Jeſus," having nothing to draw with and the well being deep, " ſaith to her, Give me to drink." The woman, perceiving by his ſpeech and habit that he was a Jew, aſketh him again, (ver. 9.) " How is it that thou being a Jew aſkeſt drink of me which am a wo- " man of Samaria? for the Jews," addeth the evangeliſt, " have no " dealings with the Samaritans. Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto her, If " thou kneweſt the gift of God, and who it is that ſaith to thee Give " me to drink, thou wouldeſt have aſked of him, and he would have " given thee living water." We may ſtop here without entring farther into the ſtory, and make ſeveral improving reflections. Upon a ſuperficial reading you may perhaps think that here is nothing particular to detain our attention; but the more you reflect, the more matter you will find for holy meditation. The ſcripture is as I may ſay a mine of truth; and that rich ore doth not lie all upon the ſurface, we muſt ſometimes dig and ſearch below.

1. The firſt reflection that any one will naturally make is upon the *perſon* with whom our Saviour holdeth this converſation. It is no reproach to the ſex to remark, that the perſon was a *woman*; for our bleſſed Saviour often vouchſafed to diſcourſe with women as well as with men, the former (contrary to the opinion of ſome) having ſouls to be ſaved as well as the latter. She ſeemeth too to have been a woman of free life and converſation, for ſhe had had five huſbands, and now cohabited with one who was not her huſband. But ſuch is the goodneſs of God, our bleſſed Saviour (Luke V. 32.) " came not to call the " righteous, but ſinners to repentance;" and it is very true as he ſaid, (Matt. XXI. 31. Luke XV. 7.) that " the publicans and the harlots " go into the kingdom of God before many juſt perſons who need no " repentance." But what I would principally remark is, that this woman was a *Samaritan*, as our Saviour was a Jew; and there was great enmity between theſe two nations on account of their religious differences. National antipathy perhaps never roſe to a greater highth than it did between theſe two people. For the Jews were the true de-

ſcendents of the patriarchs Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob; the Samaritans pretended to be ſo, but were really deſcended from thoſe ſtrange nations which Shalmanezer tranſplanted into Samaria, when he had carried the Iſraelites captive into Aſſyria. The Jews received all the books of the law and the prophets into their canon of ſcripture, as we do into ours; the Samaritans on the other hand admitted only the penteteuch or the five books of Moſes. The Jews regarded their traditions as much or more than the written law; the Samaritans on the contrary rejected all traditions, and adhered only to the written law. The Jews maintained Jeruſalem to be the place of worſhip; the Samaritans ſet up temple againſt temple and altar againſt altar on mount Gerizim. On theſe and other accounts ſuch hatred was kindled between the two nations, as is not extinguiſhed even at this day. A Samaritan was to a Jew even more deteſtable than a Heathen; and though perhaps they might traffic one with another in caſe of neceſſity as the diſciples went into the city to buy meat, yet there was no civil intercourſe or correſpondence between them. Hard names and opprobrious language were what they plentifully beſtowed on each other; and therefore the Jews, when they would expreſs the highth of their reſentment againſt our Saviour, ſay, (John VIII. 49.) "Thou art a Samaritan, and haſt a "devil."

It appears very unreaſonable, but ſuch generally is the caſe, that religious diſputes and differences, which of all others ſhould be managed moſt in the temper of meekneſs and charity, are yet generally proſecuted with the moſt extreme violence and fury. Whether it be, that religion being a matter of the greateſt concern and importance, men therefore engage the more earneſtly for it; or whether by appearing to be zealous for ſacred truths they are in hopes of being really thought ſo; or whether they expect to convince their adverſaries by ſeeming to be convinced themſelves; or whether after all they think that their orthodoxy may *cover* a *multitude* of *ſins*, and notwithſtanding their failures in practice their zeal for religion may yet like a fiery chariot carry them to heaven. However it be, that which ſhould moſt correct and ſweeten mens ſpirits, ſours and ſharpens them moſt; begets the moſt

laſting

laſting hatred, the moſt irreconcileable enmity between nations, families, friends; and, as our Saviour himſelf expreſſeth it, (Luke XII. 53.) "divideth the father againſt the ſon and the ſon againſt the father; "the mother againſt the daughter and the daughter againſt the mo- "ther;" (Matt. X. 36.) "and maketh a man's foes them of his own "houſehold." Commonly too we may obſerve, the leſs the difference between men, the greater ſtill the diſſenſion. The many and greater points in which they agree have not that efficacy to compoſe and unite them, as the fewer and leſſer points in which they differ have to divide and inflame them. The fierceſt bigots are often more kindly affectioned to men profeſſedly of no religion than even to the moſt conſcientious perſons of another religion. The Jews and the Samaritans, both of them the worſhippers of the true God, would yet at any time rather have conſpired with Gentile idolaters againſt one another than with one another againſt Gentile idolaters. Nay Chriſtians have been more oppreſſive and cruel to Chriſtians than to Turks and Heathens; and even Proteſtants, how often have they contended about forms and ceremonies to the neglect and prejudice of the very eſſentials of religion? how often have they purſued the differences between themſelves ſo far as to become ſometimes the ſport, ſometimes the prey, of their common enemy, the Church of Rome? But ſurely ſuch men do not conſider, that while they are arguing for religion, at the ſame time they are acting againſt it; and do not half ſo much good by the one, as hurt by the other. They may have "a zeal for God," (Rom. X. 2.) but it is a "zeal not according to knowlege."

How different from this was the conduct of our bleſſed Saviour toward thoſe who diſſented from him and oppoſed him? how void of paſſion, how full of meekneſs? and particularly to the Samaritans, how courteous and obliging was He notwithſtanding national prejudices? He ſeemeth deſirous to have overcome theſe prejudices in others as well as in himſelf. In St. Luke we read, (Chap. XVI.) that he cleanſed once ten lepers, and that one of them was a *Samaritan*, who when he ſaw that he was healed turned back, and fell at his benefactor's feet, glorifying God. Upon which our Saviour maketh this reflection to the

honor

honor of the Samaritan; " Were there not ten cleanſed, but where " are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to " God ſave this ſtranger; And he ſaid unto him Ariſe, go thy way, thy " faith hath made thee whole." In the parable of the traveler who fell among thieves, (Luke X.) we may obſerve that the perſons whom our Saviour maketh to come and look on him and to paſs by on the other ſide were no leſs men than a *Prieſt* and a *Levite*, but the perſon whom he maketh to have compaſſion on him and to bind up his wounds was a *Samaritan*; deſigning no doubt by theſe inſtances to take off the Jews from their unreaſonable prejudices, and to let them underſtand that how highly ſoever they might think of themſelves and how contemptuouſly ſoever of the Samaritans, yet a charitable Samaritan was more deſerving than any proud Prieſt and Levite of them all. And in the chapter now under conſideration we ſee that our Saviour enters into a religious conference even with a woman of Samaria. Jealous as he was of " giving the children's bread unto dogs," and of " caſting pearls " before ſwine," he profeſſes his character and opens his doctrin more explicitly to her than to almoſt any of the Jews themſelves.

So tender and compaſſionate was our bleſſed Saviour towards thoſe who were really Heretics and Schiſmatics from the true church of God; how much more then ought we to behave with humanity and gentleneſs, who are men of like errors and infirmities with themſelves? and how cautious ought we to be how we apply ſuch opprobrious ignominious names, and not ſhoot them like fools arrows at random? Every man is not a Heretic or Schiſmatic, who cannot think exactly as we do; and however if they were, yet that doth not give any man a right to perſecute or uſe them ill. It is the ſpirit of Chriſtianity to hurt no man, but on the contrary to do all the good that we can to all within our capacity. We ſee that no national prejudices, no religious differences could hinder our Saviour from doing good to the Samaritans, and nothing could ever provoke him to do them any evil, no not when they refuſed to receive him (Luke IX.) becauſe his face was ſet towards Jeruſalem. They rejected him no doubt with a great deal of injurious language; ſo that ſome of his diſciples were for " commanding fire " from

" from heaven to conſume them even as Elias did." But what ſaith Jeſus to it? He turned and rebuked his diſciples; " " Ye know not " what manner of ſpirit ye are of, for the Son of man is not come to " deſtroy mens lives but to ſave them."

What then can we think of that Church which ſtigmatizes all who differ from her for heretics, and then perſecutes them for being ſo? Can that be the only true Church of Chriſt, which encourages ſuch a ſpirit in her members, not only in direct contradiction to the moſt expreſs precepts of Chriſtianity, but even in violation of the firſt principles of common humanity? They may boaſt of their fifteen marks of the true Church, as I think Bellarmin reckons them; but the mark which our Saviour giveth of the true Church is charity—(John XIII. 35.) " By this ſhall all men know that ye are my diſci- " ples, if ye have love one to another."—And if charity be the diſtinguiſhing mark of the true Church, they have the leaſt pretence to that title of any community in Chriſtendom. We ſhould conſider that mens underſtandings naturally are not all of the ſame ſize and capacity; and this natural difference is greatly increaſed by different education, different employments, different company and the like, ſo that we may juſt as reaſonably quarrel with men for not having all the ſame features or not writing all the ſame hand, as for not being in all points of the ſame opinion with ourſelves. We ſhould conſider that no man is infallible any more than the Pope; we are liable to error perhaps as much as others; and they have full as much right to be angry with us for differing from them, as we have to be angry with them for differing from us. We ſhould conſider that the beſt men may ſometimes differ in their opinions, as St. Paul (Gal. II. 11.) " withſtood" even St. " Peter to the face;" and if there was ſuch a difference between two the chiefeſt apoſtles, well may there be between inferior mortals. (James III. 13, &c.) " Who" then " is a wiſe man and endued " with knowlege amongſt you, let him ſhow out of a good con- " verſation his works with meekneſs of wiſdom; But if ye have " bitter envying and ſtrife in your hearts," pretend not that this is a zeal for religion, " glory not and lie not ſo againſt the truth;

" This

" This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but is earthly, ſenſual, de-
" viliſh; But the wiſdom that is from above is firſt pure, then peace-
" able, gentle, and eaſy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits
" without partiality," or " without wrangling" as it is rendered in the margin, " and without hypocriſy; And the fruit of righteouſneſs is
" ſown in peace of them that make peace."

The importance of this article hath made me dwell the longer upon it, and indeed this article of Chriſtian peace and charity, as it is neceſſary to be inſiſted upon at all times, ſo particularly is it at this time, when we are crumbled into ſo many parties and factions, when every man is for ſeparating and ſetting up a different congregation, Unitarians, Socinians, and I know not what, and call other Chriſtians idolaters; when alſo a ſet of enthuſiaſts have riſen among us, who pretending to extraordinary communications and revelations like the papiſts, like the papiſts too abound in the bittereſt cenſures and invectives againſt their Chriſtian brethren, regard themſelves as the only true diſciples of Jeſus, boaſt themſelves as the only true preachers of the goſpel, and reprobate and condemn all others as " veſſels of wrath fitted for deſtruction." But " who art
" thou that judgeſt another man's ſervant," (Rom. XIV. 4.) and much more thine own ſuperiors? If thy faith is purer and more excellent, ſhow thy faith by thy good works, and not by railing and evil ſpeaking. If thou haſt more of the ſpirit of Jeſus, ſhow it in thy meekneſs, and lowlineſs, and humbleneſs of mind; ſhow it in thy obedience to the laws and conſtitutions of thy country; ſhow it in thy ſubmiſſion to thy eccleſiaſtical governors and regular paſtors; rend not the Church of Chriſt by an unjuſt ſchiſm and ſeparation, nor fondly imagin that ſpiritual pride can ever conſiſt with Chriſtian charity. It is in vain to pretend to a better faith, unleſs we have alſo more perfect charity than others. (1 Cor. XIII. 2.) " Though I have all faith, ſo that I could
" remove mountains, and have no charity, I am nothing." " Bear ye
" therefore (Gal. VI. 2.) one another's burdens, and ſo fulfil the law
" of Chriſt."

2. Next to the perſon with whom our Saviour converſeth, we ſhall naturally reflect upon the *ſubject* of his converſation and how he *introduceth*

duceth it. The ſubject of his diſcourſe, as of all his diſcourſes, is religion; and he introduceth it very eaſily and fitly upon the preſent occaſion. Being weary and thirſty with his journey, he deſires to drink of the water that the woman was drawing. She was ſurpriſed, and inquires how he who was a Jew could aſk drink of her who was a Samaritan? Then Jeſus turneth the diſcourſe to a ſpiritual meaning; and ſaith that if ſhe had aſked of him he would have given her "living water;" and thus introduceth the diſcourſe of his doctrin under that eaſy metaphor taken from the preſent ſcene and the preſent occaſion. Nothing is forced and conſtrained, all is natural and eaſy: and it was uſual with our Saviour to borrow thus his images and alluſions from things upon the ſpot, and to adapt his diſcourſe to the occaſions rather than the occaſions to his diſcourſe.

In his ſermon on the mount there are many things ſaid in alluſion to the eminence on which he ſat and to the proſpect which lay before him. (Matt. V, VI, VII.) The ſun ſhining over their heads he calleth his diſciples "the light of the world." Sitting on a hill himſelf and probably having ſome city on a hill in view, he obſerves that a "city ſet on a hill cannot be hid." Seeing the birds flying and the lillies growing round about him, he biddeth his diſciples with regard to food and cloathing "to behold the fowls of the air "and to conſider the lillies of the field." It being now the ſeaſon of fruits, he admoniſheth of "knowing men by their fruits:" And finally compares the "hearing and doing of his doctrin to build-"ing upon a rock," and the "hearing and not doing of his doc-"trin to building upon the ſand," which were compariſons taken from objects then preſent before the eyes of his auditors. In the goſpel of St. Mark, (Mark X.) at the ſight of little children he ſpeak-eth of the "innocence of the elect:" And in the goſpel of St. John (John IX.) on occaſion of a blind man he diſcourſeth of "ſpiritual "light and ſpiritual blindneſs." Being in the temple, where ſheep were kept in folds near at hand for the convenience of ſacrifices, (John X.) he ſaith many things in parables of "the ſheep and the "ſhepherd." Being in the mount of Olives, a place fruitful of oils and wines, (John XV.) he ſaith many things in parables of the

" vine and the huſbandman." On occaſion of temporal food (John VI.) he ſpeaketh of " ſpiritual food and of eating his body" in a myſtical manner: As here in the paſſage before us on occaſion of common water he ſpeaketh of " ſpiritual water, whereof whoſoever " drinketh ſhall never thirſt."

Abundance of ſimilar inſtances might be collected; ſo cuſtomary was it with our Saviour to moralize upon every ſubject, and to turn even the moſt ordinary occurrences into ſpiritual improvement. But now by a ſad and fatal reverſe of things, they who would be preſumed to be the politeſt and beſt company, inſtead of ever promoting any moral and religious diſcourſe endevor all they can to divert and decline it: and thoſe are become the favorite and reigning diverſions, which not only tend no ways to improvement, but cut off all poſſibility of a rational converſation. A man is almoſt aſhamed in company to be betrayed into a ſerious reflection; but as our Saviour ſaid, (Matt. XII. 34, 35.) " How can ye being evil ſpeak good " things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth ſpeak- " eth; a good man out of the good treaſure of the heart bringeth " forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treaſure bring- " eth forth evil things." Vain conceptions will naturally be followed by vain diſcourſe; and then no wonder ribaldry paſſeth for wit, and noiſe for mirth and good humor. But do ſuch perſons ever regard this example of Chriſt, or conſider the precepts of Chriſtianity? (Col. IV. 6.) " Let your ſpeech be alway with grace, " ſeaſoned with ſalt." (Eph. IV. 29.) " Let no corrupt communica- " tion proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the " uſe of edifying, that it may miniſter grace unto the hearers." (Matt. XII. 37.) " For by thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy " words thou ſhalt be condemned."

3. It is obſervable that our Saviour begins the diſcourſe of his doctrin with a *parable*, and the parable which he maketh uſe of on the preſent occaſion is that of *water* and *living water*. He begins the diſcourſe of his doctrin with a *parable*, according to the cuſtom of the Eaſt, to inſinuate the truth in the moſt agreeable manner,, to open it by degrees and not to communicate it all at once, to try at

firſt

firſt how it would be reliſhed, and then to impart it more freely afterwards: And the parable which he maketh uſe of on the preſent occaſion is that of *water* and *living water*, not only as it was excellently adapted to the ſcene and ſubject of their converſation as we before obſerved, but was alſo a figure of ſpeech ſeemingly much in uſe in the eaſtern ſtile to expreſs the gifts and graces of God. According to this notion the prophet Jeremiah (II. 13.) calleth God "the "fountain of living waters" and the falſe Gods "broken ciſterns "that can hold no water; They have forſaken me, ſaith the Lord, "the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out ciſterns, "brokens ciſterns that can hold no water." As God is here ſtiled "the fountain of living waters," ſo Chriſt being "the brightneſs "of his father's glory and the expreſs image of his perſon," is promiſed by the prophets under the ſame appellation; (Iſa. XXXII. 1, 2.) "Behold a king ſhall reign in righteouſneſs, and a man ſhall be "as rivers of water in a dry place:" (Zech. XIII. 1.) "In that "day there ſhall be a fountain opened to the houſe of David and "to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem." As Chriſt is called the *fountain*, his doctrin may properly be ſaid to be *the water of that fountain*; "Ho every one that thirſteth, come ye to the waters," ſaith the prophet Iſaiah (LV. 1.) inviting men to embrace the goſpel. Our Saviour therefore maketh ſuch frequent uſe of this figure; therefore he ſaith to the woman of Samaria, that he would give her *living water*; and therefore he declares in the Revelation, (XXI. 6.) "I "will give unto him that is athirſt of the fountain of the water of "life freely," and again (XXII. 17.) "Let him that is athirſt "come; and whoſoever will let him take the water of life freely." And this metaphor our Saviour adopts with great propriety particularly on two accounts, as water is one of the common bleſſings of nature, and much valued eſpecially in thoſe hot countries, and being the cauſe is always conſidered as the emblem of purity. When our Saviour therefore ſpeaketh of his doctrin under the metaphor of water, he implies that it is not limited to this or that age, is not peculiar to this or that people, but is to be diffuſed

and propagated in all ages and all nations. It is not to be locked up from the people in an unknown tongue for the inſpection of prieſts and monks only; It is *living water*; it is not to ſtagnate, but to flow and circulate for the uſe and benefit of mankind. Beſides, water being always conſidered as the emblem of purity, it is a proper metaphor to denote that purity of life and converſation which the goſpel teaches and exacts from us. This is one reaſon why water is made uſe of in baptiſm, to repreſent unto us by the "waſhing away "of the filth of the fleſh" the waſhing away as I may ſay of the filth of the ſoul, (1 Pet. III. 21.) "and the anſwer of a good con-"ſcience towards God." "Having therefore" this pure water, (2 Cor. VII. 1.) "let us cleanſe ourſelves," as the apoſtle ſpeaketh, "from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the "fear of God."

4. Our Saviour in ſaying "If thou kneweſt the gift of God and "who it is that ſaith to thee Give me to drink, thou wouldſt have aſked "of him, and he would have given thee living water," implies that the knowlege of divine things is well worth our deſiring and aſking, and that God is ever ready to confer this knowlege on all ſuch as do really deſire and aſk it. Wiſdom is one of the nobleſt faculties of our nature, and of all wiſdom religious wiſdom may juſtly claim the præeminence, and deſervedly retain the title (which one of the (1) Fathers hath given of it) of "the Art of Arts and Science of Sci-"ences." For this is the knowlege of the moſt excellent things, the nature and attributes of God, the fall and redemption of man, ſpirits and angels, heaven and hell, our duty and our happineſs in this world and the other. This is a knowlege without which the mind can never reſt ſatisfied; and if it cannot attain the ſubſtance, it will ſtill purſue the ſhadow. The mind, like the fabled iſland Delos, cannot always float about in uncertainty, but muſt fix at laſt, and if it hath not true principles to reſt upon, it will reſt upon falſe. All other knowlege is for time, but this is for eternity. A man may be happy with this without any other knowlege, but with

(1) Τεχνη τεχνων και επιστημη επιστημων. Greg. Naz.

any

any other knowlege without this he muſt be miſerable. "Wiſdom is "the principal thing," (Prov. IV. 7.) (and by wiſdom we all know is meant religious wiſdom) "Wiſdom is the principal thing, therefore "get wiſdom, and with all thy getting get underſtanding." The beſt way to obtain this heavenly wiſdom is by frequent and earneſt prayer to God for his bleſſing upon our ſtudies and ſearches after truth, that what in us is dark he would inlighten, what is low he would raiſe, and make us (Pſal. CXIX. 18.) "to behold wondrous things out of "his law." And if a man offers up ſuch prayers ſincerely, truth will be his reward, or error will never be his crime. His ſincerity at leaſt will be accepted; and if not requited here, yet infallibly hereafter. Indeed we have all the reaſon to think that God will requite it here from the conſideration of his infinite mercy and goodneſs; but theſe conſiderations are improved into greater certainty by the moſt expreſs aſſurances of revelation. "If any of you lack wiſdom," ſaith St. James, (I. 5.) "let him aſk of God that giveth to all men liberally and up-"braideth not, and it ſhall be given him." And a greater than St. James obſerves, (Luke XI. 13.) "If ye being evil know how to give "good gifts unto your children, how much more ſhall your heavenly "Father give the Holy Spirit to them that aſk him?"

5. One thing more let me juſt obſerve before we conclude. This incident of our Saviour's meeting at a well with a woman of Samaria, how little ſoever it may appear in itſelf, was yet the occaſion of her converſion, and the converſion of many of the Samaritans to the Chriſtian religion. So true it is, that the greateſt events often depend upon the moſt minute and inconſiderable circumſtances; and we may not only experience it in the turns and changes of our own private lives and fortunes, but may alſo ſee it exemplified in the great revolutions and alterations of public governments. What to men is caſual, to God is always providential. "Not even a ſparrow falleth to the ground without our "heavenly father." (Matt. X. 29, 30.) Nay "the very hairs of our "heads are all numbered." Wherefore in all events depend upon providence; (1 Pet. V. 6, 7.) "Humble yourſelves under the mighty hand "of God, that he may exalt you in due time, Caſting all your care

"upon

" upon him for he careth for you." (Phil. IV. 6, 7.) " Be careful for " nothing, but in every thing by prayer and ſupplication with thankſ- " giving let your requeſts be made known unto God; and the peace " of God which paſſeth all underſtanding ſhall keep your hearts and " minds through Chriſt Jeſus."

DISSERTATION XXV.

On our SAVIOUR's Diſcourſe with the Woman of Samaria.

PART THE SECOND.

IT is one of the firſt principles of natural religion, that man as the creature is to worſhip God as the creator. From ſuch a relation neceſſarily ariſeth ſuch a duty, and no conſequence in numbers or mathematics can be clearer or more certain. But notwithſtanding all men ſee the neceſſity of worſhipping the ſupreme Being, yet all men do not equally ſee what manner of worſhip will be moſt pleaſing and agreeable to him; and therefore ſo many different forms and rituals have been eſtabliſhed in the world, and all are pretended to be true and genuin, how various and contradictory ſoever they are one to another. Here then the generality of mankind evidently want ſome direction; and where can they find it ſo properly as in the word of God himſelf? The light of revelation will direct us where the light of nature is deficient; and not only ſhow us the true object of our worſhip, but teach us alſo the beſt manner of worſhipping him. (John IV. 24.) " God is a ſpi- " rit, and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in " truth."

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The words are the ſum and ſubſtance of our Saviour's diſcourſe with the woman of Samaria. Our Saviour having convinced her by miracle that he was a prophet, ſhe immediately applies to him for ſatisfaction in the great controverſy between the Jews and Samaritans, whether Jeruſalem or mount Gerizim was the place of worſhip where men ought to bring their offerings and ſacrifices; (ver. 20.) "Our fathers wor-"ſhipped in this mountain, and ye ſay that in Jeruſalem is the place "where men ought to worſhip." Jeſus intimates that this controverſy was of very little importance; for the occaſions of it would ſoon be removed, the people taken away, the rites aboliſhed, and the temples deſtroyed; (ver. 21.) "Woman believe me, the hour cometh, when "ye ſhall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jeruſalem worſhip the "Father." However in the mean time he aſſures her, that the Jews were in the right and the Samaritans in the wrong; (ver. 22.) "Ye wor-"ſhip ye know not what;" at your firſt ſettlement in this country ye joined other gods with the true God, and now ye have not ſo diſtinct and perfect a knowlege of him as the Jews: "We know what we "worſhip;" we know more of his nature and his will, having not only the law but the prophets: "For ſalvation is of the Jews;" the Jews are at preſent the true church of God, and of them deſcends the Meſſiah the Saviour of the world. But this diſtinction between the Jews and Samaritans, as he had hinted before, was to continue but a little while; (ver. 23.) "The hour cometh, and now is, when the "true worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father" neither on mount Gerizim nor yet at Jeruſalem, neither after the Samaritan nor yet after the Jewiſh manner, but "in ſpirit and in truth, for the Father ſeeketh "ſuch to worſhip him," and hath ſent his Son into the world to invite and engage them. The Chriſtian religion now opens a nobler ſcene, and now begins a higher order of things. The worſhip of God under the goſpel is not limited to place, or tied to forms, but is a ſpiritual worſhip ſuited to his ſpiritual nature. "God is a ſpirit, and "they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth." The words contain a propoſition, "God is a ſpirit;" and an inference from this propoſition, "and they that worſhip him, muſt worſhip him

"in

"" in ſpirit and in truth;" of which it will be therefore neceſſary to treat in their order.

I. The propoſition " God is a ſpirit." A propoſition ſo agreeable to the reaſon and apprehenſion of mankind, that the ſcripture no where proveth it, but rather ſpeaketh of it as a thing on all hands allowed and granted. And indeed it is the voice of nature as well as of revelation, the ſentiment of thinking heathens in all ages as well of prophets and inſpired writers. I remember, one of them, a Roman, particularly ſays (1), that we cannot conceive otherwiſe of God, than of a pure and free mind, ſeparate from all mortal compoſition or mixture. It is true we can hardly frame any tolerable notion of the ſupreme Being, without including in it the idea of a mind or ſpirit. Imagin a God, and you muſt imagin him a ſpirit, or deny moſt of his attributes and in effect his being itſelf. For if God was not a ſpirit, where would be his *immenſity?* Wherever there was a vacuum, or wherever there was any other body, he would neceſſarily be excluded, or we muſt recur to that abſurd notion that the world and all things in it are God. If God was not a ſpirit, what would become of the *unity* of the divine nature? For all matter conſiſts of parts, and is not one body but numberleſs bodies united; nothing can be pure, and homogeneal, and ſimple, and one but a ſpirit. If God was not a ſpirit, where would be his *omnipotence?* For matter is quite paſſive; being at reſt it cannot put itſelf into motion, and being in motion it cannot lay itſelf to reſt; it is ſo far from being indued with almighty power, that it ſeemeth to partake of no power at all; is only an inſtrument in the hand of ſpiritual agents, and never properly an agent itſelf. If God was not a ſpirit, where would be his *omniſcience?* For what evidences, what tokens of underſtanding, of thought, of apprehenſion, are there in a piece of matter? Could matter create a human ſoul, which though confined and impriſoned in a body is yet free in thought to range and traverſe the univerſe? And if a human mind ſo far tranſcends all the known properties of matter, how exceedingly and infinitely more muſt the divine? In

(1) Nec vero deus ipſe, qui intelligitur a nobis, alio modo intelligi poteſt, niſi mens ſoluta quædam et libera, ſegregata ab omni concretione mortali. Cicero. Tuſc. I. 27.

ſhort

ſhort where would be the *moral* attributes of God, his unerring juſtice, his tender mercy, his diffuſive goodneſs; where would be his providence, and the ſuperintendency and direction of the world, if there was no mind to govern, and matter was all in all? It hath been queſtioned very juſtly (2) whether even omnipotence can ſuperadd to matter a faculty of thinking, diviſibility and ſelf-conſciouſneſs being ſeemingly inconſiſtent and incompatible the one with the other. But even (3) they, who have believed it poſſible for omnipotence to ſuperadd to matter a faculty of thinking, have yet aſſerted and maintained, that the firſt, eternal, thinking being could not poſſibly be material.

But we muſt not only not conceive the deity to be material, but we muſt not imagin him to be any thing like a man, a ſpirit cloathed with a body, limited to any ſhape, or circumſcribed within any figure whatever. It is true, the ſcripture often ſpeaketh of God under ſenſible images and repreſentations. An eye, a hand, an arm and other parts of a human body are frequently attributed to him. Our very paſſions and affections are aſcribed to the divine nature, love, hatred, joy, ſorrow, repentance, anger and the like, which are the properties of imbodied ſpirits. But we ſhall be very groſs interpreters of the ſacred text, if we underſtand theſe figures of ſpeech ſtrictly and litterally. The inſpired writers in theſe caſes, as one of them ſays expreſly, (Rom. VI. 19.) "ſpeak after the manner of men becauſe of the infirmities of "our fleſh." The ſcripture in theſe inſtances plainly accommodates itſelf to the weakneſs of our capacities; and it would be wonderfully ungrateful to God, becauſe he is pleaſed to ſpeak like a man, to fancy therefore that he exiſts like one; becauſe he graciouſly condeſcends to our infirmities, to abuſe his gracious condeſcenſion to the reproach and blemiſh of the divine nature. But let us not be evil, becauſe he is good. Infinity and immenſity cannot be bounded by any figure; neither can a ſpirit to bodily eyes ever be viſible. "No man hath ſeen "God at any time," ſays St. John, (John I. 18.) He is "the inviſi-"ble God; no man hath ſeen him or can ſee him," ſays St. Paul: (1 Tim. I. 17. VI. 16.) and when Moſes deſired to ſee the face of God,

(2) See Dr. Clarke's Letter to Mr. Dodwell, and the Defenſes of it, which I eſteem as valuable a part as any of his writings.

(3) Mr. Locke and others.

God anſwered him (Exod. XXXIII. 20.) " Thou canſt not ſee my " face, for there ſhall no man ſee me and live." We may ſee God in his operations, as we may ſee our underſtandings in our actions; but actually ſee God with our eyes we can no more than we can ſee our own ſouls.

But neither is this ſufficient; we muſt raiſe our thoughts yet higher. We muſt not only not conceive the ſupreme Being to be an imbodied ſpirit; but even when we ſpeak of him as a ſpirit without a body, we muſt not imagin him to be like a human ſoul. Man may be ſaid indeed to be made " in the image of God," as he is made a rational and immortal ſoul; but he is a very faint image and reſemblance, a copy that falleth infinitely ſhort of the great original. He is probably one of the loweſt in the ſcale of intelligent beings. And as in the material world we ſee things gradually riſe higher and higher from inanimate matter to man, ſo by analogy we may conclude, that in the ſpiritual world alſo things riſe higher and higher from man towards the infinite perfections of God. This we are certain of that there is infinitely a greater diſtance between God and man than between man and the moſt inorganical piece of matter. And as the ſcripture maketh uſe of ſeveral appellations, *angels* and *archangels*, *cherubim* and *ſeraphim*, *thrones* and *dominions*, *principalities* and *powers*, theſe names in all probability are not applied without a determinate meaning, but are ſo many different denominations of ſo many different ranks and orders of beings. " In my Father's houſe," ſays our Saviour, (John XIV. 2) " are many manſions;" and doubtleſs many manſions are not for one ſpecies of beings, but for many. It is highly probable, that there are infinitely more ſpecies of beings in the inviſible world above us, than there are in the viſible world below us. And the ſorts and ſpecies of angels may differ as much theſe from thoſe, and thoſe again from ſome others, as animals from men, or men from angels. One ſort may poſſibly be inveſted with bodies of a nicer frame and texture than ours, others may ſtill have finer bodies than theſe or be cloathed with ſome aerial vehicle, a third ſort may be cloathed with an æthereal finer than any aerial body, and a fourth ſort may be without any æthereal body whatever,

whatever, and be all life and underſtanding, all ſoul and ſpirit. But after all, with our utmoſt force and compaſs of thought, when we have imagined the moſt pure, the moſt knowing, the moſt powerful, the moſt perfect ſpirit that we can, there will ſtill be a ſpirit infinitely more pure, more knowing, more powerful, more perfect than any that we can imagin, and that ſpirit, with the addition of all other infinite perfections, is God, " the firſt and the laſt, the beginning and the end, " the king of kings, and the lord of lords."

II. It may ſuffice to have ſaid thus much of the propoſition in the text, " God is a ſpirit;" and now for the inference from this propoſition, " and they that worſhip him muſt worſhip him in ſpirit and in " truth." The worſhip of God " in ſpirit and in truth" may be oppoſed to the carnal ordinances and typical ceremonies of the Jews and Samaritans; but there is no neceſſity for underſtanding the words in ſo particular and limited a ſenſe. The propoſition in the text is general and abſolute, and this inference from it may be underſtood in the ſame manner. Neither do I conceive that the words *ſpirit* and *truth* have exactly the ſame meaning, or are different expreſſions only for the ſame thing; for each word ſeemeth to convey a diſtinct and different idea. To worſhip God *in ſpirit* is to worſhip him in a ſpiritual manner, in oppoſition to mere external rites and ceremonies; and to worſhip him *in truth* is to worſhip him with ſincerity, in oppoſition to the conſtrained and formal devotion of hypocrits.

To worſhip God *in ſpirit* is to worſhip him in a ſpiritual manner in oppoſition to mere external rites and ceremonies. He is a ſpirit himſelf, and therefore is to be worſhipped in ſpirit. Not that all bodily worſhip is excluded under the goſpel, as ſome would infer from this text, but infer without any reaſon. For what are the Chriſtian ſacraments but rites and ceremonies of divine inſtitution? and do we not ſerve and worſhip God in them with external ſervice and worſhip? And as to bodily geſtures kneeling and the like, doth not St. Paul ſay of himſelf (Eph. III. 14.) " I bow my knees unto the Father of our " Lord Jeſus Chriſt?" Doth not our Saviour himſelf, when he prayeth for his apoſtles, (John XVIII. 1.) " lift up his eyes to heaven?" and

when he prayeth in the garden, (Luke XXII. 41. Matt. XXVI. 39.) doth he not "kneel down," and even "fall upon his face?" We conſiſt of a body and a ſoul; and we are therefore to "glorify God "in our body and in our ſpirit which are God's." (1 Cor. VI. 20.) But as the ſoul is the principle of life, the ſeat of reaſon, the particle of divinity, we muſt worſhip him with this chiefly, or we ſhall offer him no better than a noiſome carkaſs inſtead of "a liv- "ing ſacrifice, which is our reaſonable ſervice." (Rom. XII. 1.) External adoration without a ſuitable inward affection, is of no more value than an empty caſket when the jewels are taken away.

In the darker and more illitterate ages of the church there was a ſect of Chriſtians, who received their denomination [Anthropomorphites] from their opinion, that the deity ſubſiſted in a human form: and where men's notions are ſo low and depraved, their religion will be low and depraved in proportion. But we, who live as I may ſay in the light and the ſun, who can demonſtrate by reaſon, who can prove by revelation, that God is a pure ſpirit, infinite in himſelf and infinite in all perfections, we are certainly obliged to worſhip him in a more ſpiritual and refined manner, to make our bodies the temple of the Lord, and our ſouls the holy of holies. A Heathen could ſay that (4) the beſt, the moſt chaſt, the moſt holy and the moſt pious worſhip of the Gods is, that we reverence and adore them always with a pure, entire, and incorrupt mind and voice. And how unreaſonable then are thoſe Chriſtians, who load and incumber their religious ſervice with ſo many forms and ceremonies, as eat out the heart and ſubſtance of all inward piety and devotion? A man muſt be an able maſter of the ceremonies perfectly to underſtand a Roman ritual. And what can be the uſe and deſign of ſo much pomp and ſplendor? There is no need of gilding gold; that is only for baſer metals and counterfeits. Such foppery in religion is like paint to a good face; it not only hideth the real beauty under a falſe luſtre, but in effect ruins and deſtroys it. Nay they not only

(4) Cultus autem Deorum eſt optimus, idemque caſtiſſimus atque ſanctiſſimus pleniſſimuſque pietatis,

only debaſe the ſpiritual nature of the chriſtian religion, but diſhonor the ſpiritual nature of God himſelf, repreſenting him (as we may ſee commonly in their altar-pieces and in their manuals of devotions) in the form of an old man, and worſhipping him (if they do really worſhip him) through the medium of an image.

But whatever they may think of it, it is idolatry to worſhip not only the falſe Gods, but even the true God by any image or ſenſible repreſentation. The bowing down to an idol conſtitutes idolatry, whoever is repreſented by that idol. When the Iſraelites made their golden calf, they were not ſo groſs as to imagin that the very calf which they had juſt then made was the God who brought them up out of the land of Egypt; they deſigned it only as a repreſentation, and in the ſtory they are ſaid (Exod. XXXII. 5.) to proclaim "a "feaſt to the Lord:" but yet for all this the ſcripture chargeth them with idolatry, and they were puniſhed accordingly. In like manner the golden calves, which were afterwards ſet up in Dan and Bethel, were intended for the repreſentations of the God of Iſrael; but ſtill they were idols, and the worſhippers of them were idolaters. What was the caſe alſo of the heathen world? Were they ſo ſtupid as to imagin ſtocks and ſtones to be Gods? No, but "when "they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but changed the "glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to cor-"ruptible man:" and thus, as the apoſtle ſays, (Rom. I. 21, &c.) "profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became fools."

For how is it poſſible for an image to raiſe our conceptions to a ſpirit? What likeneſs, what reſemblance is there between them? As the pſalmiſt ſaith (Pſal. CXXXV. 18.) ſpeaking of idols, "They "that make them are like unto them, ſo is every one that truſteth "in them." It was one of the great ends and deſigns of our Saviour's coming into the world, not only to baniſh all the idols of the Heathens, but likewiſe to cancel and aboliſh all the ceremonies of the Jews. A pure and ſpiritual worſhip is now required of us,

pietatis, ut eos ſemper pura, integra, incorrupta et mente et voce veneremur. Cic. de Nat. Deor. II. 28.

without

without any ceremonies but ſuch as inſtead of clogging and debaſing exalt and improve our devotion. If the mind be thoroughly affected, we ſhall naturally ſhow it in ſuitable geſtures and emotions of body; and thoſe geſtures and emotions of body will again raiſe and elevate the affections of the mind; the body acting back again upon the ſoul, as the ſoul acteth upon the body. And we can never raiſe our thoughts and affections too high. As we are to "love "God," (Mark XII. 33.) ſo we are to worſhip him, "with all "the heart, and with all the underſtanding, and with all the ſoul, "and with all the ſtrength;" and this "is more than all whole "burnt-offerings and ſacrifices."

To worſhip God *in truth* is to worſhip him with ſincerity, in oppoſition to the conſtrained and formal devotion of hypocrits. Sincerity is the life and ſoul of religion: hypocriſy weareth only the cloak and the vizard. Hypocriſy maketh even our beſt works an abomination, turneth our very prayers into ſin: ſincerity is the beſt recommendation of our virtues if we are in the right, the beſt palliation and excuſe for our errors if we happen to be in the wrong. If we are ſwayed more by religious motives than by worldly conſiderations, more by conſcience than by intereſt; if we are as careful to do nothing amiſs in private and when alone, as in public and before company; if our reſolutions of obedience are univerſal and unlimited, without any reſerve or diſtinction for a favorite paſſion or darling inclination; if the general tenor of our lives and actions is agreeable to our holy profeſſion, and free from any groſſer inſtances of ſin, though not free from human infirmities; if we are not lazily contented with our preſent attainments in virtue, but are ſtill aſpiring after greater perfection, (Phil. III. 13.) "forgetting thoſe "things which are behind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things "which are before;" if we keep our integrity equally amid the ſmiles of proſperity and the frowns of adverſity, neither temptations can allure us nor dangers deter us; then may we be ſaid to ſerve and worſhip God in ſincerity, then (1 John III. 21.) will "our hearts "condemn us not, and we may have confidence towards him."

It

It is not the formality of going to church, the frequenting of prayers or hearing of ſermons, that will juſtify us in the ſight of God; for it is evident that ſome perſons, while they are there, are more employed in gazing about, than in expreſſing the reverence due to the ſupreme Being, before whom they ſtand and for whoſe ſake they are ſuppoſed to come thither: or perhaps their religion is all outſide, and though they "honor God with their lips," (Matt. XV. 8.) yet "their hearts may be far from him:" or perhaps the other parts of their lives and actions are not anſwerable to theſe beginnings; they may "receive the word with joy," (Luke VIII. 13, 14.) but ſoon "choak it with cares and riches and pleaſures "of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection." It is certain "the form of godlineſs" is not always accompanied with "the "power;" and perhaps, as in civil matters where is moſt ceremony and compliment, there commonly the leaſt is meant or intended; ſo likewiſe in religious matters where is moſt of "the form "of godlineſs," there may be leaſt "of the power."

But on whom would they impoſe? "He that planted the ear, "ſhall he not hear? he that formed the eye, ſhall he not ſee?" (Pſal. XCIV. 9.) He that is the father of ſpirits, the author and giver of our ſouls, ſhall he not underſtand all their thoughts and motions? ſhall he not know our hearts, who is more intimate with us, than we are with ourſelves? If God was a man like ourſelves, we might probably impoſe upon him with formal ſpeeches and empty profeſſions, and perhaps the more formal and empty the more impoſing: but if we think to deceive him, we ſhall be miſerably miſtaken, we ſhall only deceive ourſelves. The greateſt hypocrits are the greateſt ſelf-deceivers. "All things are naked and "open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Heb. IV. 13.) He regiſters our moſt ſecret actions now, and hereafter they will be publiſhed and expoſed on the theatre of the world in the ſight of men and angels. "For God will bring every work into "judgment with every ſecret thing, whether it be good or bad." (Eccleſ. XII. 14.) "Beware therefore of the leaven of the Phariſees, "which

" which is hypocriſy; For there is nothing covered that ſhall " not be revealed, neither hid that ſhall not be known." (Luke XII. 1, 2.) And " Grace be with all them," as the apoſtle ſpeak-eth, (Eph. VI. 24.) " who love our Lord Jeſus Chriſt in ſincerity." He that is not a ſincere Chriſtian, is no Chriſtian. And do thou, O God, who tryeſt the hearts and reins, and requireſt truth in the in-ward parts, do thou (Pſal. XIX. 12, 13, 14.) " keep back thy " ſervants not only from preſumptuous ſins, but cleanſe us alſo from " our ſecret faults, that the words of our mouths and the medita-" tions of our hearts may be acceptable in thy ſight, O Lord our " ſtrength and our redeemer."

DISSERTATION XXVI.

On our SAVIOUR's Eloquence.

ELOQUENCE is a perfection that few indeed attain, though it be what many ſtudy and what all admire. The truth is, we muſt think well, before we can ſpeak well. No man ever thought like the bleſſed Jeſus, and therefore no man ever ſpake like him. He was the Word, the Word of God; and no wonder therefore that he was never equaled by man. When he was yet only twelve years old, he was found in the temple (Luke II. 46, 47.) " ſitting in the " midſt of the doctors, both hearing them and aſking them queſ-" tions; And all that heard him were aſtoniſhed at his underſtand-" ing and anſwers." Afterwards, when he had entered upon his public miniſtry, and was preaching in the ſynagogue at Nazareth, his countrymen though they were prejudiced againſt him, (Luke IV. 22.) " all bare him witneſs, and wondered at the gracious words

" which

" which proceeded out of his mouth." When Jeſus at the feaſt of tabernacles went up into the temple, and there taught the Jews, (John VII. 15, 16.) they " marveled ſaying, How knoweth this " man letters, having never learned?" To which queſtion the only proper anſwer could be what Jeſus replied, " My doctrin is not " mine, but his that ſent me." But the effect of our Saviour's eloquence is no where more remarkable, than in the following ſtory, related by St. John (VII. 32—46.) The chief prieſts and phariſees, obſerving that the people began to entertain him for the Meſſiah, thought it high time to put a ſtop to his progreſs, and ſent their officers to apprehend and bring him before them. After ſome time the officers return but without Jeſus. Upon this the chief prieſts and phariſees provoked aſk them " Why have ye not brought " him?" The officers anſwer without any reſerve, " Never man " ſpake like this man." Their rage was charmed down by his diſcourſe, and they could not lay hands on him.

A marvelous inſtance this of the force of eloquence and hardly to be paralleled in hiſtory. I remember they relate in commendation of Cicero, what a wonderful effect one of his orations had upon Cæſar. Ligarius was proſecuted for having been in arms againſt Cæſar; Cicero undertakes his defenſe and pleads his cauſe, which Cæſar permitted more out of compliment to the orator for the pleaſure of hearing him, than out of any motive of juſtice to the criminal for he was determined to condemn him. But Cicero had no ſooner begun his oration than Cæſar was moved; and the more he ſays, the more he is moved; he trembles; he changes countenance; he drops the papers which were in his hand; the victor is vanquiſhed; the orator prevails; and the criminal is acquitted. But what is all this to the inſtance before us? Cæſar was a perſon of great humanity and clemency, of fine taſte and learning, and therefore it is the leſs ſurpriſing that he ſhould be affected by ſuch an oration from ſuch an orator; being eloquent himſelf he could not be inſenſible to the charms of eloquence. Or perhaps it was only one piece of artifice played off againſt another. Cæſar's emotions might be all af-

fectation. He might counterfeit a rapture more than he felt, and pretend to be won againſt his will to Cicero's purpoſe, that he might the more effectually gain Cicero to his own. The oration itſelf, which is extant, would induce this opinion; for there is nothing ſo very extraordinary in the compoſition, nothing that ſo much excites our admiration, as thoſe effects which it is ſaid to have had upon Cæſar. But that men of no learning and humanity (ſuch as the inferior officers, employed in ſeizing and arreſting of perſons, uſually are) that they ſhould be ſoftened by eloquence; that they ſhould pay more regard to the words of Jeſus than to their Lords and Maſter's poſitive order; that they ſhould venture rather to offend them than commit the leaſt violence to him; that they ſhould not only have the goodneſs to be moved by his divine diſcourſe but have the courage alſo to own it, and plead it in their excuſe and juſtification; are ſuch effects indeed as evidently demonſtrate without their telling us, that "never man ſpake like this man."

To particularize all the beautiful paſſages in our Saviour's divine diſcourſes would be little leſs than to tranſcribe the goſpels. We can touch only upon a few of them; and for method's ſake we will conſider them under the three heads of his *precepts*, his *parables*, and his *occaſional diſcourſes*.

I. As to our Saviour's *precepts*. The great beauty of a precept is that it be clear and that it be ſhort; clear, that it may be readily underſtood, and (1) ſhort that it may eaſily be remembered. The precepts and laws of Chriſt are excellent in both theſe reſpects, and not like modern laws verboſe and intricate; ſo prolix and numerous that it is a great expenſe even to purchaſe the volumes, and frequently ſo worded, that they ſerve to perplex rather than inform, to beget diſputes rather than end them. Indeed nothing can be expreſſed with more brevity and at the ſame time with more perſpicuity than all our Saviour's moral diſcourſes. The ſenſe of them is ſo ſublime, that they afford inſtruction to the wiſeſt; the language of them is ſo plain, that

(1) Quicquid præcipies, eſto *brevis*. Hor.
Ῥηματα βραχεα αξιομνημονευτα. Plat. in Protag.

they

they tranſcend not the capacity of the meaneſt. The ſentiments ennoble the ſtile, the ſtile familiarizes the ſentiments. The Heathen moraliſts, even the beſt and politeſt of them, fall infinitely ſhort of him in the expreſſion as well as in the matter. Many a ſingle period of his conveys more inſtruction, and with more force, with more energy than whole chapters of theirs.

Of all his moral diſcourſes his Sermon upon the mount (as it is uſually called) I think we may reckon the beſt, for the ſame reaſon that Cicero did one of Demoſthenes's orations, becauſe it is the longeſt. There is a ſyſtem of morals how ſhort and yet how comprehenſive! With what ſimplicity and plainneſs delivered, and yet with what dignity and authority! not only ſurpaſſing all the Heathen moraliſts, but improving and adding perfection even to the law and the prophets! How beautifully doth this divine diſcourſe open with the beatitudes, and in the beatitudes how elegantly doth the latter member of each period anſwer to the former, the reward of the virtue to the virtue itſelf! (Matt. V. 4, &c.) "Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall "be comforted; bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after righte-"ouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled; bleſſed are the merciful, for they "ſhall obtain mercy!" Nothing could be more ſuitable to the ſpirit and character of that religion, which was deſigned to be a bleſſing in the earth—It is a very good moral to do our alms privately not to be ſeen of men; but our Saviour inlivens it with a vigorous Proſopopœia that giveth great force and emphaſis to the ſentence; (Matt. VI. 3.) "When thou doeſt alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right "hand doeth."—"Whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do to you "do ye even ſo to them," (Matt. VII. 12.) is an axiom worth a volume; and well might the Roman Emperor Alexander ingrave it on the walls of his palace and carry it on the banners of his army.—In ſhort we may in ſome meaſure judge of the excellence of this diſcourſe by the effect that it had upon the audience; the people "were aſto-"niſhed" ſays the ſacred hiſtorian (Matt. VII. 29.) "at his doctrin, "for he taught them as one having authority and not as the ſcribes;" he did not like the Jewiſh doctors deſcant upon the traditions of the

elders; but he ſpake to them like one commiſſioned from heaven with authority and majeſty. *Nec vox hominem ſonat.* That may be truly applied to him, which was falſely and fulſomly addreſſed to Herod, (Acts XII. 22.) " It is the voice of a God and not of a man."

Some of the (2) fathers are of opinion, that out of the writings of the philoſophers might be collected a ſyſtem of morals not unlike thoſe of the goſpel; and it muſt be admitted indeed, that there are many noble truths in them though clouded with great error and ſuperſtition; there is ſome pure and genuin ore, though mixed with an infinite deal of droſs. Apelles from the beauties of Greece drew his picture of Venus; and it may be, from the philoſophers of Greece a ſkilful hand might exhibit a true portrait of virtue: But though it might be like, it would never be equal; the Heathen virtue would be as much inferior to the Chriſtian as humanity to divinity.

II. As to our Saviour's *parables.* The people of the eaſt have ever delighted in the bold figurative ways of ſpeaking; and particularly in fables, allegories, and parables. Their imagination like their ſun is warmer, their ſtile like their fruit is richer and of higher flavor, than ours in theſe northern climates. Our Saviour therefore properly maketh frequent uſe of parables in accommodation to the taſte and genius of his country. And without doubt this is a more lively, agreeable, entertaining method of inſtruction than dry precept or narration; it (3) mixes the profitable with the pleaſant, and delights and improves together. But this is not all; our Saviour hath uſually ſome farther view; there are reaſons of ſtill greater fitneſs and propriety.

Sometimes he involves his diſcourſe in parables, becauſe of the unfitneſs of ſome of his audience, becauſe they were not of diſpoſitions and tempers to hear the whole truth; weak and prejudiced underſtandings being as little able to bear too much truth, as ſore or weak eyes too much light. Thus for inſtance when he diſcourſeth to a mixt audience of his diſciples and the multitude about the nature and future ſucceſs of his kingdom, ſuch pearls were not to be caſt before ſwine, and therefore he wrappeth up his doctrin in the parables of *the ſower*, of

(2) Juſtin Mart. Apol. 1. Lactant. lib. 7.

the

the tares, of *the muſtard-ſeed* and others as may be ſeen at large in the XIIIth chapter of St. Matthew. All theſe things he explained in the houſe to his diſciples, but to the reſt he ſpake to them in parables, it is his own reaſon and in his own words, (ver. 13, 14, 15.) " becauſe they ſeeing ſee not, and hearing they hear not, neither do " they underſtand; And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Eſaias " which ſaith, By hearing ye ſhall hear and ſhall not underſtand, and " ſeeing ye ſhall ſee and ſhall not perceive; for this peoples heart is " waxed groſs, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they " have cloſed, leſt at any time they ſhould ſee with their eyes, and hear " with their ears, and ſhould underſtand with their heart, and ſhould " be converted and I ſhould heal them."

Sometimes he involves his diſcourſe in parables, to inſinuate an offenſive truth which perhaps it might not be ſafe for him to ſpeak more plainly, making uſe of figures as we do of cloaths not only for ornament but for defenſe. Thus for inſtance the calling and election of the Gentiles, the reprobation and rejection of the Jews were points to be handled very tenderly for fear of giving offenſe; and certainly he would have expoſed himſelf to danger, and probably have pulled down immediate vengeance upon his head, if he had ſpoken his ſentiments freely and without reſerve or diſguiſe. It was therefore great art and prudence in him to veil theſe offenſive truths (Matt. XXI. and XXII.) in the parables of *the wicked huſbandmen* and *the marriage of the king's ſon*; and ſo, though they apprehended his meaning well enough, yet they had not matter whereof to accuſe him.

Sometimes he maketh uſe of ſeveral parables to illuſtrate and enforce the ſame point of doctrin, the ſame repreſentation not affecting all alike, but one image ſtriking one man, another another. Thus for inſtance in one chapter (Luke XV.) we have the parables of *the loſt ſheep*, of the *loſt piece of money*, and of *the prodigal ſon*; and all to repreſent the joy that there is among good angels and good men at the repentance and converſion of a ſinner.

(3) Omne tulit punctum qui *miſcuit utile dulci.* Hor.

In

In all his parables there is obſerved the greateſt decency and delicacy with a bias commonly to the charitable ſide, as if he was willing to believe that the number of the good was at leaſt equal to that of the bad; as in the parable of *the prodigal ſon*, (Luke XV.) if he was bad and waſted his ſubſtance with riotous living, his brother was good and always lived with and was obedient to his father; in the parable of *the ten virgins*, (Matt. XXV.) if five were fooliſh, the other five were wiſe; and in the parable of *the talents*, if there was one who buried his talent and therefore was puniſhed, there were two who doubled theirs, and therefore were rewarded.

In reality whole ſermons may be written upon any one of our Saviour's parables; and therefore it is not to be expected, that in one part only of a diſcourſe we can be able to compriſe the beauties of them all. In all he ſhoweth himſelf an excellent painter; His parables are the moſt lively pictures; nothing is too much, nothing is wanting; we not only read, but we ſee the things as it were before our eyes. And if any one entertains the leaſt doubt of this, let him only peruſe for his conviction the parables of *the Rich man and Lazarus*, and of *the prodigal ſon*. That of *the Rich man and Lazarus* is ſo natural and lively, that many have queſtioned whether it is a parable or a real ſtory: And if any man can read that of *the prodigal ſon* without the tendereſt emotions, he muſt have a very bad heart or a very bad head, muſt be a mercileſs cruel father or a graceleſs profligate ſon.

III. As to our Saviour's *occaſional diſcourſes*. Theſe are all with wonderful diſcernment and addreſs adapted to the places where, and to the times when, to the occaſions upon which, and to the perſons to whom, they were ſpoken.

In ſome former diſſertations ſeveral inſtances have been given of the great eaſe and propriety of his diſcourſes; his converſation was never forced and conſtrained, but naturally flowing from objects which then ſurrounded him, from occurrences which then aroſe, from the times of the day or the ſeaſons of the year, from things ſaid or done by perſons then preſent. He was too not altogether an incurious obſerver of what

(4) Joſeph. Antiq. Lib. 18. Cap. 6. Edit. Hudſon.

paſſed

paſſed on the great ſtage of the world, as may be collected from ſome of his alluſions to public tranſactions. When he ſpake (Luke XIV. 31.) of "one king going forth with ten thouſand men to meet another "coming againſt him with twenty thouſand;" he plainly had in view what had happened juſt before to (4) Herod the tetrarch, imprudently leading his army through Judea to fight with Aretas king of Arabia, who came againſt him with ſuperior forces and defeated him. When he delivered the parable (Luke XIX. 13, &c.) of "a certain noble-"man going into a far country to receive for himſelf a kingdom and "to return," and of "his enemies hating him and ſending a meſſage "after him, ſaying We will not have this man to rule over us; and "it came to paſs that when he was returned having received the king-"dom, then he commanded his enemies, which would not that he ſhould "reign over them, to be brought and ſlain before him;" he manifeſtly alluded to the (5) caſe of Archelaus, who went to Rome to ſollicit the emperor that he might be inſtated in his father's kingdom, and the Jews ſent an embaſſage after him, to petition and plead againſt him, but however he was confirmed in the kingdom of Judea, and when he returned took ample vengeance of his enemies and oppoſers. When our Saviour ſaid to his diſciples (Luke XXII. 25.) "The kings of the "Gentiles exerciſe lordſhip over them, and they that exerciſe autho-"rity upon them are called benefactors;" he reflected upon the vanity of the princes of thoſe times, who delighted in ſuch titles, when they ought to have been called *tyrants* and *robbers* more than *benefactors*. Other inſtances without doubt there are of the ſame kind, whereof the hiſtory is not known at preſent, as when he ſpake (Luke XIV. 28, 29.) of a man "intending to build a tower, and laying the foundation, "and not being able to finiſh it, and all that beheld it mocking him." All theſe occurrences he converted to moral and religious uſes.

Not only nothing improper ever fell from him, but every thing he ſays is perfectly juſt and proper. Even they, who were ſent to watch him and inſnare him in his diſcourſe, were ſo far from ſucceeding in their attempts, that they went away wondering at him and his anſwers;

(5) Joſeph. ibid. Lib. 17. Cap. 13.

nothing

nothing ſhowing greater ability and preſence of mind than dextrous replies upon the ſudden to captious inſnaring queſtions. In the VIIIth chapter of St. John we have an account of a woman taken in adultery. The ſcribes and phariſees bring her to Jeſus and ſay unto him, (ver. 4, 5, 6.) "Maſter this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act; "now Moſes in the law commanded us that ſuch ſhould be ſtoned, "but what ſayeſt thou? This they ſaid tempting him" (ſays the hiſtorian) "that they might have to accuſe him." And indeed the queſtion was ſuttle enough; for if he had anſwered in the affirmative, that ſhe ſhould be ſtoned, they would have accuſed him to the Roman governor for aſſuming a judicial authority in capital caſes; and if he had anſwered in the negative, that ſhe ſhould not be ſtoned, they would have accuſed him to the Jews for ſpeaking contrary to the law of Moſes. What courſe therefore doth he take under this dilemma! Why, he ſkilfully evades giving a direct anſwer either way; he neither acquits nor condemns her; only ſays, (ver. 7.) "He that is without ſin among "you, let him firſt caſt a ſtone at her." And the event was, (ver. 9.) "They were convicted by their own conſcience, and went out one by "one." In the XXIId chapter of St. Matthew we read, that the Phariſees with the Herodians were ſent to tempt him with this queſtion, (ver. 17.) "whether it was lawful to give tribute unto Cæſar or not." And here lay the difficulty, if he had declared for the payment, he would have offended the Phariſees who were aſſertors of the privileges and immunities of the people of God; if he had declared againſt the payment, he would have offended the Herodians who were friends and advocates of the Roman government: by the one he would have incurred the cenſure and hatred of the Jews; by the other he would have made himſelf obnoxious to the civil magiſtrate. How therefore doth he behave upon this occaſion? Why, he determins nothing to offend either ſide himſelf, but artfully draweth a concluſion out of their own mouth, (ver. 19, 20.) "Show me the tribute-money; Whoſe "is this image and ſuperſcription?" Upon their ſaying, Cæſar's, "Render

(6) There is a remarkable paſſage about our Saviour's ſilence in one of the Fathers. It is in Ignatius his

" Render therefore," ſays he, (ver. 21.) " unto Cæſar the things that are " Cæſar's, and unto God the things that are God's." The inſinuation and addreſs are incomparable. The Phariſee could not be offended at the former clauſe, and muſt be pleaſed with the latter; the Herodian could not be offended at the latter clauſe, and muſt be pleaſed with the former. Both parties (ver. 22.) " marveled and left him." There are other inſtances in the ſame chapter; but we have not time to inſiſt upon them at preſent. The iſſue of all was, (ver. 46.) " No man " was able to anſwer him a word, neither durſt any man from that " day forth aſk him any more queſtions."

It is not only in one ſtile and manner of ſpeaking that he is a maſter, but he wears all dreſſes and charms in all. When the ſubject requires ſharpneſs and ſeverity, can any thing be expreſſed with greater vehemence and acrimony than his reprehenſion of the ſcribes and phariſees hypocrits? No ſatir in Juvenal is ſo pointed, or carries ſuch a ſting in it, as the XXIIId chapter of St. Matthew. When the ſubject calleth for pity and commiſeration, can any thing be conceived and uttered with greater pathos and tenderneſs than his lamentation over Jeruſalem? None of the dying ſtrains in the old tragedians exceed or even equal it. (Luke XIX. 41, 42.) " And when he was come near, he beheld the " city and wept over it, ſaying if thou hadſt known, even thou, at leaſt " in this thy day the things which belong unto thy peace, but now " they are hid from thine eyes." (Matt. XXIII. 37.) " O Jeruſalem, " Jeruſalem, thou that killeſt the prophets and ſtoneſt them which are " ſent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children toge- " ther, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye " would not!" Can any thing be more eaſy and familiar than his diſcourſe in his ordinary converſation? Can any thing be more grand and ſublime than what he ſays upon great occaſions? As when he ſaid unto the ſea, (Mark III. 39.) " Peace be ſtill, and the wind ceaſed and there " was a great calm;" and as when he cried unto Lazarus in his grave, (John XI. 43, 44.) " Lazarus come forth, and he that was dead came " forth." His very (6) ſilence is ſublime as well as his eloquence: And

his Epiſtle to the Epheſians; Εις ων διδασκαλος, ος ειπεν και εσεσθη, ὰ ζιζων δε ποιησεν αξια του παρος εξιν· ὁ λογον Ιησυ κεκτημενος αληθως δυναται και της ησυχιας αυτυ ακουειν, hear his very ſilence.

as an inſtance that he knew both how to ſpeak and how to be ſilent with dignity, we need only read the account of his behaviour at his trial. In ſhort his eloquence is equaled by nothing but his goodneſs; and this it is that giveth ſuch a force to the other. There are men who can talk and write like angels; but while they live like devils, ſuch eloquence is no better than "ſounding braſs or a tinkling cymbal." It is the rule laid down by the Rhetoricians, that to be good orators we muſt be good men. Jeſus as he was the beſt of orators was alſo the beſt of men. His virtue raiſed and dignified his eloquence; his eloquence adorned and illuſtrated his virtue.

We have confined our obſervations to ſome paſſages in the goſpels, but we might as eaſily have extended them to the whole bible. The bible is not only the ſtandard of truth, but exhibits alſo ſome of the fineſt ſpecimens of oratory; is not only the beſt body of divinity, but excels all other books in diction as well as in matter. Moſes is as much before other hiſtorians in merit as in time. (7) Longinus himſelf ſpeaketh of him as no ordinary writer, and citeth his account of the creation as an inſtance of the true ſublime. What maſterly paintings and deſcriptions are there in the book of Job? what ſublime tropes and figures in the prophet Iſaiah? how exceedingly ſurpaſſing the boldeſt happieſt flights of Homer and Virgil? What an infinitely richer vein of finer ſenſe, finer poetry, runs through the pſalms than any of the hymns of Horace or Pindar? Is there any thing in Theocritus comparable to that divine paſtoral the Song of Solomon? And what are the ſentences of Theognis or the golden verſes of Pythagoras in the balance with the book of Proverbs? And to come yet lower, produce the nobleſt paſſages out of Plato and Demoſthenes, and yet nobler both in ſentiment and diction may be produced out of St. Paul. It is true we commonly read the ſacred authors under the diſadvantages of a litteral proſe-tranſlation, and that not ſo correct and perfect as it might be: but even all theſe diſadvantages cannot totally cloud and eclipſe their beauties; their ſuperior ſpirit, like the ſun, every now and then

(7) Long. de Subl. ſect. 9.

breaks

breaks forth, and warms and tranſports us whether we will or not. So that (as Dr. South (8) obſerves) " He who would not read the " ſcripture for fear of ſpoiling his ſtile, ſhewed himſelf as much a " blockhead as an atheiſt, and to have as ſmall a guſt of the ele- " gancies of expreſſion as of the ſacredneſs of the matter." Never let us ſo fooliſhly abandon truth, ſenſe, reaſon, every thing, in affectation of a falſe politeneſs. Never let us be (Pſal. LVIII. 4, 5.) " like the deaf adder, that ſtoppeth her ear, and will not hearken " to the voice of charmers, charming never ſo wiſely." If Gentlemen could be induced to read the Scripture, only as they read the Claſſic Authors; if they were averſe from it as their duty, and did it only as a thing of rational entertainment; they would infallibly find their account in the experiment, and though perhaps they might not meet with ſo many of the little accuracies of writing, yet they could not fail of being entertained with truer, nobler, and more ſublime beauties than any in the fineſt productions of Greece or Rome. If they are men of taſte, they cannot but admire; if they are men of taſte and religion too, they cannot but reverence. There are ſuch graces and ornaments of ſpeech, as muſt pleaſe even though they were deſtitute of truth: and there is ſuch truth, as muſt ever charm even though it was ſtript of all graces and ornaments. Every good Chriſtian therefore may properly take up the words of the pſalmiſt, and apply them to the ſcripture as well for the richneſs and variety of the ſtile as for the truth and excellence of the matter: (Pſal. XIX. 7, &c.) " The law of the Lord is perfect, " converting the ſoul; the teſtimony of the Lord is ſure making " wiſe the ſimple; The ſtatutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing " the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, inlightning " the eyes; The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever; the " judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether; More " to be deſired are they than gold, yea than much fine gold; " ſweeter alſo than honey and the honey-comb; Moreover by them " is thy ſervant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward."

(8) South's Sermons Vol. 4. p. 32.

DISSERTATION XXVII.

CHRISTIANITY our true Liberty.

LIBERTY is one of the greateſt bleſſings and prerogatives of life; that which giveth us a true taſte and reliſh of all the reſt; and therefore it cannot be too much prized and valued where it is, nor too earneſtly deſired and ſought after where it is not. All men are naturally born to it, and yet alas how ſmall a part of the world really enjoys it. If they are not ſlaves to others, yet men are commonly ſlaves to themſelves, to their own luſts and paſſions. But this however we may aſſert, that wherever true government is maintained, wherever true religion is practiſed, there is perfect liberty. Religion indeed hath been often repreſented in a different light, and one of the principal objections made to it by profane men is that it abridgeth us of our natural liberties, and layeth us under ſuch reſtraints, as human nature is not able to bear; it is fit for nothing, ſay they, but to curb and break mens ſpirits, and to render them tame and tractable to be ridden at pleaſure by prieſts and princes. And indeed as religion hath been managed in ſeveral countries, it is little better than an engin of ſlavery, a politic device and inſtrument for ſome men more eaſily to govern others, to make their "godlineſs" their "gain," and to "lord it over God's "heritage." But the author of our religion ſhould certainly beſt underſtand the nature and end and deſign of it: And we have him declaring it to be ſo far from inſlaving mankind, that the true religion will make us free; (John VIII. 31, 32.) "If ye continue in "my word, then are ye my diſciples indeed, And ye ſhall know "the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free.

Our liberties may be conſidered of two kinds, *civil* and *religious*; and it may be aſſerted, that Chriſtianity is no enemy to our *civil*, and

and is a great friend to our *religious* liberties. And as the ſubject of liberty is always pleaſing and entertaining to generous ſpirits, ſo is it more eſpecially proper and ſeaſonable at a time when ſo much unreaſonable noiſe and clamor are excited, ſo many miſtaken notions are propagated, and unbounded licentiouſneſs prevails under the ſpecious name of liberty.

I. With regard to our *civil* liberties Chriſtianity was not deſigned to make any alteration in them, but to leave the governments of the world, as it found them. But if it hath done nothing to advance and improve our rights and privileges, yet neither hath it done any thing to infringe and leſſen them. St. Paul (Rom. XIII. 2.) calleth government "the ordinance of God," St. Peter (1 Pet. II. 13.) ſpeaketh of it as "the ordinance of man." And indeed government in general may be called "the ordinance of God," as being perfectly agreeable to his will, and promoting the ends of his providence; but the particular ſorts of government, the particular powers of governors, theſe are conſtituted by mutual agreement and compact expreſſed or implied between the governors and the governed: As marriage in general is a divine inſtitution, but the marriage of any particular couple is founded in mutual agreement and compact between the man and the woman.

The place of ſcripture, where obedience to the civil magiſtrate is more preſſed and inculcated than in any other, is the XIIIth Chapter of the Epiſtle to the Romans; and many a leſſon of ſlavery hath been taught from thence. But it is evident from the context, that the apoſtle is ſpeaking there of good magiſtrates, of thoſe who "are "miniſters of God for good," of thoſe who "are not a terror to "good works but to the evil;" and what he ſaith of good magiſtrates and ſuch as anſwer the end of their inſtitution, it is ſurely very unfair to apply, and very abſurd to think it ought to be applied, to evil magiſtrates and ſuch as act contrary to the end of their inſtitution, which is the ſafety and good of their people. It was the buſineſs of the apoſtle to give only general rules, and not to enter into the particular exceptions.

Conſidering

Conſidering the jealouſies which were entertained, of Chriſtianity as a dangerous innovation in the ſtate, and of the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity as preachers of ſedition and men (Acts XVII. 6.) "that "turned the world upſide down," it became them to guard particularly againſt ſuch exceptions, to recommend in an eſpecial manner obedience to the civil powers, to teach it to others and to practiſe it themſelves. And accordingly they did practiſe it, whenever it was right and lawful; but when obedience became ſinful, then they refuſed to obey, and inſiſted on their rights and privileges upon ſeveral occaſions.

When the rulers and council of the Jews commanded Peter and John (Acts IV. 18.) "not to ſpeak at all nor teach in the name of "Jeſus," did they acquieſce and ſubmit to theſe orders? No, but they honeſtly and reſolutely declared, that they muſt "obey God "rather than men." Paul and Silas were beaten and impriſoned unlawfully at Philippi, (Acts XVI.) and the next day the magiſtrates ſent to ſet them at liberty. One might have thought this would have contented them, and they would have been glad of their liberty at any rate: But St. Paul was not ſo eaſily ſatisfied, and required public reparation as they had been publicly injured; "They have "beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have caſt "us into priſon; and now do they thruſt us out privily? nay ve-"rily," ſays he, "but let them come themſelves, and fetch us "out." And he inſiſted upon it, till "they came and beſought "them and brought them out, and deſired them to depart out of the "city." At Jeruſalem we ſee him again inſiſting on his privileges as a Roman citizen; (Acts XXII. 25.) "And as they bound him "with thongs, Paul ſaid unto the centurion that ſtood by, Is it "lawful for you to ſcourge a man that is a Roman, and uncon-"demned?" So that it is not contrary to the patience of a Chriſtian, or even of an Apoſtle, to aſſert his liberty like a Roman. Again how doth he reprove the high prieſt Ananias (Acts XXIII. 2, 3.) for "commanding them that ſtood by him to ſmite him? Sit-"teſt thou to judge me after the law, and commandeſt me to be

"ſmitten

" ſmitten contrary to the law?" intimating that the law is the meaſure of action to thoſe who govern as well as to thoſe who obey.

They therefore who make Chriſtianity an inſtrument of tyranny abuſe it to purpoſes for which it was never intended; in its own nature it will have a contrary effect, will teach princes to rule as the " miniſters of God for good," and ſubjects to obey " not only for " wrath but alſo for conſcience ſake." And for our parts we may obſerve with gratitude, that in the kingdom where the Chriſtian religion is profeſſed in the greateſt purity, there is the trueſt liberty. In no part of Chriſtendom is there ſuch deſpotic power, ſuch abſolute ſoveranty exerciſed as in the kingdoms of the Eaſt, and we know that Mohammediſm generally prevails there, a religion calculated to ſupport tyranny as it is by tyranny ſupported.

II. With regard to our *religious* liberties Chriſtianity may be ſaid to make us free in *three* reſpects, and all of them probably intended by our Saviour; but we will inſiſt more particularly upon the latter, becauſe we conceive that to be more particularly intended.

1. Chriſtianity may be ſaid to make us free, as it hath delivered us from the ceremonial law of the Jews; " that yoke," as St. Peter calleth it, (Acts XV. 10.) " which neither we nor our fathers were able to " bear." Chriſtians are not under " the ſpirit of bondage again to " fear, (Rom. VIII. 15.) but have received the ſpirit of adoption where- " by they cry Abba Father." They are no longer *ſervants* but *ſons.* And as this argument is much inſiſted on by the apoſtles, ſo particularly by St. Paul in his epiſtles. He is throughout a ſtrenuous aſſertor of our Chriſtian freedom, and frequently exhorts the new converts to (Gal. V. 1.) " ſtand faſt in the liberty wherewith Chriſt hath made us " free and not to be intangled again with the yoke of bondage."

2. Chriſtianity may be ſaid to make us free, as it delivers us from the bondage of ignorance and error; the whole duty of man being now more clearly underſtood, " and life and immortality brought to light " through the goſpel." Ignorance is, as I may ſay, a dungeon of darkneſs; knowlege is a kind of inlargement of our minds, and giveth a freer ſcope, a freer range and compaſs to thought. The goſpel is often

often compared to *light*; and it is as great a light in the moral world as the ſun is in the natural. And wherever it hath ſhone out, or been ſuffered to ſhine out, in its native luſtre, there ſuperſtition and ignorance have fled before it like miſts before the morning-ſun. What a ſpirit of Antichriſt is it then that eclipſeth this light, that locketh up this ſacred treaſure in an unknown tongue, and keepeth the people in ignorance only to keep them in devotion and obedience? (2 Cor. III. 17, 18.) "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; and we "all with open face, beholding as in a glaſs the glory of the Lord, are "changed into the ſame image, from glory to glory, even as by the "Spirit of the Lord."

3. Chriſtianity may be ſaid to make us free, as it delivers us from the yoke and bondage of ſin, from the tyranny and dominion of our luſts and paſſions. And this it doth principally by affording the beſt arguments and motives to this purpoſe; by chalking out the lines of duty in the plaineſt manner, and engaging and enabling us in the moſt effectual manner to walk in them; by ſealing to us the pardon of all paſt ſins, and aſſuring us of the aſſiſtance of divine grace for the future. "Whoſoever committeth ſin," ſaith our Saviour, (John VIII. 34.) "is "the ſervant of ſin." The ſlave who is chained all day long to an oar, or labors digging in the mines, hath ſtill his mind free, and his thoughts his own; but an habitual ſinner is a ſlave both in body and ſoul, and much leſs to be pitied of the two becauſe he is a ſlave of his own making. He is indeed a complete ſlave in all reſpects, for neither doth any tyrant lay ſuch a tax upon an eſtate as a man's own vices; which either ſquander it away in luxury and extravagance, or entail a ſecret curſe upon it that like a cankerworm waſtes and conſumes it. What addeth ſtill to the miſery is, that in other inſtances ſervitude is commonly impoſed by our ſuperiors, men generally ſerve others wiſer or greater than themſelves: but here our ſuperior faculties are made ſubſervient to our inferior, underſtanding giveth way to appetite, reaſon obeyeth paſſion, the heavenly and divine part of us ſubmitteth to the earthly and brutal; which is much worſe than what Solomon ſaith he had ſeen, (Eccleſ. X. 7.) "ſervants upon horſes, and princes walking

as

" ſervants upon the earth." But the baſeneſs and ſlavery of a life of ſin, the liberty and dignity of a life of holineſs will appear more if we deſcend more into particulars, and draw ſome compariſon, form ſome contraſt between them.

Which conduceth more to a man's eaſe, more to the health of his body, more to the improvement of his mind, temperance or exceſs? The man who is a ſlave to his appetite is ſurely one of the loweſt of ſlaves, and is little wiſer or better than the ox that fattens himſelf for ſlaughter. There is more eaſe and delight even in mortification and ſelf-denial, than in ſurfeiting and exceſs; and a man's ſpirits are better, and he is fitter for contemplation and action after the one than after the other.—How much more doth the ſober man enjoy life and enjoy himſelf than the drunkard? How much freer his ſtomach from ſickneſs, and his head from pain? how ſweet his ſleep? how cool his evenings? how clear his mornings? But (Prov. XXIII. 29, 30.) " who " hath woe? who hath ſorrow? who hath contentions? who hath " babling? who hath wounds without cauſe? who hath redneſs of " eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to ſeek mixt " wine."—Is there not as much difference between living chaſtly and living diſſolutely, as between the life of a man and the life of a beaſt? Is not health, reputation, credit, peace of mind the portion of the one? Is not ſhame, rottenneſs, infamy, miſery the conſequence of the other? " For," as Solomon ſaith, (Prov. VI. 26.) " by means of a " whoriſh woman a man is brought to a piece of bread." (VII. 22, &c.) " He goeth after her, till a dart ſtrike through his liver; For " ſhe hath caſt down many wounded, yea many ſtrong men have been " ſlain by her; Her houſe is the way to hell, going down to the cham- " bers of death."—The covetous man is a ſlave to Mammon, not daring to enjoy the wealth that he has gotten. Nay he not only maketh his gold his maſter, but his god; and therefore in ſcripture the covetous man is called an *idolater*. But generoſity of temper is freedom of temper; and as the covetous man maketh his gold his maſter, the generous man uſeth it as his ſervant to miniſter to his own occaſions and to thoſe of others.—Oeconomy and frugality are virtues of the free and independent,

independent, whereas luxury and extravagance in ſingle perſons as well as in nations are commonly the forerunners of ſlavery. The man who liveth within his income liveth above the world; but extravagance maketh a man neceſſitous, and neceſſity maketh him dependent, ſo that (Prov. XXVIII. 21.) " for a piece of bread that man will tranſ-" greſs."—Is there not always ſomething noble and erect in honeſty and truth, and ſomething again mean and cowardly in lying and falſhood? Is not the one the ſpirit of a free man, and the other of a ſlave? In this ſenſe it may properly be ſaid, that " the truth ſhall make us " free." Truth ennobles and dignifies our nature; lies debaſe and demean it.—Whoever harbours revenge in his boſom, puniſheth himſelf more than his adverſary. There is not half that pleaſure, half that glory in returning an injury as in forgiving it. If you revenge yourſelf upon your enemy, you are but even with him; but if you forgive him, you make yourſelf his ſuperior.—Finally, which is eaſier and freer for a man's ſelf as well as for others a ſpirit of contention, animoſity, and ill-nature, or chriſtian charity and benevolence? that is as far from thinking ill as from doing it, doeth good to all within its ſphere, and wiſheth well to all without it. Can there be a doubt which is the greater freedom, which is the nobler privilege and prerogative of our nature, to be like God or the devil, to carry a heaven in our breaſts, or a hell?

In like manner it might be inſtanced in every virtue and every vice, and in all and every one it would appear that the ſervice of God is perfect freedom, but " whoſoever committeth ſin is the ſervant of ſin;" there is no drudgery, no ſlavery like guilt and wickedneſs. And what amends doth ſin make for ſuch laborious ſervice? what wages doth it give? what rewards doth it promiſe? Why, " the wages of ſin is " death;" ſhame and diſgrace, remorſe and deſpair, the dread of divine vengeance here, and everlaſting miſery hereafter. (Rom. VI. 23.) " The wages of ſin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through " Jeſus Chriſt our Lord."

As you regard then your liberty, the eaſe and health of your bodies, the peace and quiet of your mind, live always a life of religion and virtue.

virtue. It is in vain to promiſe ourſelves *liberty*, as long as we are "the "ſervants of corruption, (2 Pet. II. 19.) for of whom a man is over-"come, of the ſame is he brought in bondage." We of this country are generally ambitious to be thought freemen, and would take it for a great indignity to be reputed ſlaves; let us be careful not to be ſlaves in the worſt ſenſe of the word; ſlaves to the loweſt and meaneſt of maſters, our luſts and paſſions; ſlaves in the nobler and divine part of us, our immortal ſouls. Be not deceived, it is not liberty to follow our appetites and paſſions, and to do juſt as our corrupt inclinations prompt and incite us. This is the liberty of a beaſt or a mad man, and not of an intelligent rational creature. The liberty of an intelligent rational creature is being able and free to act according to right reaſon, and the righteſt reaſon is religion. There cannot be ſaid to be liberty in a ſtate but anarchy and uſurpation, when the loweſt of the people become the higheſt and the higheſt the loweſt; (Iſ. III. 5.) "when the child behaves himſelf proudly againſt the ancient, and "the baſe againſt the honorable:" And ſo neither can a man be ſaid to enjoy his liberty, but to live in bondage and ſlavery, when the faculties which ſhould obey, govern, and thoſe which ſhould govern, obey; when paſſion uſurps the place of reaſon, and commands him as the centurion did his ſervant; (Matt. VIII. 9.) "Go and he goeth, "come and he cometh, do this and he doeth it." True liberty is acting according to the truth of nature and the truth of religion. Freedom from ignorance, freedom from error; underſtanding to direct, and will to follow; a commanding reaſon, and paſſions obeying; this is the liberty of a rational moral agent, and this liberty is to be found only in religion. Living without rule, living without law, is not liberty but licentiouſneſs, is not freedom but anarchy and confuſion. The freeſt ſtates have their laws. All creatures, animate as well as inanimate, men as well as animals, angels as well as men, are ſubject to law of one kind or other. Nay God himſelf is a law to himſelf as well as to all other things beſides; a being as of the moſt perfect liberty, ſo of the moſt perfect goodneſs; and he would ceaſe to be the one, if he ſhould ceaſe to be the other. Law therefore is ſo far from

being inconſiſtent with liberty, that it is rather conducive to it and perfective of it; and Chriſtianity is therefore with great propriety and elegance called by St. James, (I. 25.) " the perfect law of liberty."

So " perfect a law of liberty" it really is, and ſo much for the intereſt and happineſs of mankind; that we may juſtly deny that religion, which any ways deprives us of our liberties, to be the true religion. And therefore if there was none other argument againſt Popery (as God knoweth there are innumerable) yet the Church of Rome can never be the true Church, becauſe ſhe is ſuch an enemy to liberty, forbidding the ſcriptures to be read in the vulgar tongue, denying the uſe of reaſon and private judgment, requiring an implicit faith in her infallibility, and perſecuting, burning, and maſſacring thoſe whoſe conſciences cannot join in her communion. What! did the meek and holy Jeſus come to eſtabliſh a ſpiritual tyranny? We are free by nature, and are we to be ſlaves by grace? No, Chriſt on the contrary directs us (John V. 39.) to " ſearch the ſcriptures;" requires us (Luke XII. 57.) to " judge of ourſelves what is right;" commands us (Matt. XXIII. 9.) to " call no man our father upon earth, for one is our father which is " in heaven;" and declares (John XIII. 35.) that " by this ſhall all " men know that we are his diſciples, if we have love one for another." This is the glorious liberty of the ſons of God. Only let us take care that we abuſe not this liberty into licentiouſneſs; for that is the danger to which we ſeem moſt expoſed at preſent, not ſo much to loſe our Chriſtian liberty as to abuſe it. It is the apoſtle's advice, and with that I will conclude; (Gal. V. 13.) " Brethren ye have been called " unto liberty; only uſe not liberty for an occaſion to the fleſh; but " by love ſerve one another." (1 Pet. II. 16, 17.) " As free and not " uſing your liberty for a cloke of maliciouſneſs, but as the ſervants of " God; Honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the " king."

DIS-

DISSERTATION XXVIII.

On the CHRISTIAN Sacraments.

BESIDES thoſe things which are commanded, becauſe they are neceſſary; there are others which are neceſſary only becauſe they are commanded: and ſuch for inſtance are the Chriſtian Sacraments, Baptiſm and the Supper of the Lord. It hath been made matter of objection to the Chriſtian religion by ſome, that Chriſt ſhould deliver any precepts beſides thoſe of pure morality; that it was below the Son of God to preſcribe forms and ordinances; that it is more than we can do to diſcharge the moral duties, and therefore it was cruel to load us with any addition of poſitive inſtitutions. Others, who may not carry the matter ſo high as to make it an objection to the Chriſtian religion, may yet perhaps wonder within themſelves what could be the reaſons of our Saviour's laying ſuch a ſtreſs upon things ſo ſeemingly indifferent, as baptizing with water, eating a little bread, and drinking a little wine. In order therefore to remove the objections of thoſe, and to ſatisfy the ſcruples of theſe, we will enter into the doctrin of the Chriſtian ſacraments, and endevor as well as we can to ſhow the reaſonableneſs and expediency of theſe inſtitutions. Firſt ſuch things may reaſonably be injoined if for no other end but for the trial and exerciſe of our obedience. But 2dly religion cannot well ſubſiſt without poſitive inſtitutions, there never was any religion in the world without ſome, and thoſe of the Chriſtian religion are few in number and not in the leaſt burdenſome. And 3dly there was a proper occaſion for introducing them into the Chriſtian religion, and they are apt repreſentations of what they were deſigned to repreſent. 4thly Though the things are indifferent in themſelves, yet they are highly moral, highly religious

ligious in their ends and uſes. And 5thly the benefits annexed to them are not annexed to the bare reception of them, but to the devout and worthy reception.

1ſt. Such things may reaſonably be injoined if for no other end but for the trial and exerciſe of our obedience. As God gave us being at firſt, and ſtill continues us in it; as we are the workmanſhip of his hands, and all that we are and all that we have are owing to his bounty; he hath an abſolute right to our obedience, and in the fulleſt ſenſe of the words he is our *lord* and we are his *ſervants*. Having therefore an abſolute right to our obedience, he may exerciſe this obedience in what inſtances he ſhall think proper; and his commanding a thing for no other reaſon but to exerciſe our obedience is reaſon ſufficient for commanding it. It is true we obey God in obeying the moral commands; but in moral duties beſides the will and command of God to oblige us, there are the nature and reaſon of things to engage our obedience; whereas in poſitive inſtitutions we cannot ſo readily apprehend the reaſon of the thing, and obey only becauſe we are commanded. Our obligation to the former is double, both becauſe they are good and becauſe they are commanded; our obligation to the latter is only becauſe they are commanded. The former are commanded becauſe they are good; the latter are only good becauſe they are commanded. Our performance therefore of the latter is an act of more pure obedience. It is poſſible, a man may be a moral man without being religious; but obedience to poſitive inſtitutions is pure obedience: and God may reaſonably injoin them if for no other reaſon but to exerciſe this obedience. We are obliged to the duties of morality, as men with only the light of nature and reaſon to direct us; as Chriſtians bleſſed with the additional light of revelation and the goſpel, ſomething more is required of us. The ſacraments are marks and badges to diſtinguiſh us as Chriſtians: and (John III. 5.) "except we be "born of water and of the Spirit, we cannot enter into the king-"dom of God;" (VI. 53.) "except we eat the fleſh of the Son "of man, and drink his blood, we have no life in us."

2dly.

2dly. Religion cannot well ſubſiſt without poſitive inſtitutions; there never was any religion in the world without ſome, and thoſe of the Chriſtian religion are few in number and not in the leaſt burdenſome. As man is a compound of ſoul and body, his worſhip ſhould be neither all external nor all internal, but be like himſelf in one part bodily, in one part ſpiritual; and conſequently there ſhould be rules to regulate the one as well as the other. Moreover as man is not only an individual but likewiſe a member of ſociety, his worſhip ſhould be public as well as private; and conſequently times and places, and forms of worſhip muſt be appointed. Religion therefore cannot well ſubſiſt without poſitive inſtitutions; they are like fences which being broken down or taken away the incloſure becomes common; they are like cloaths no part of the body indeed but they keep the body warm, and are both its ornament and defenſe.

In fact too there never was any religion in the world without ſome poſitive inſtitutions or other, whether true or falſe, whether ancient or modern, Heathen or Mohammedan, Jewiſh or Chriſtian: a ſtrong preſumption that no religion can ever ſubſiſt without them, ſince none ever did; and that all lawgivers have thought them neceſſary, ſince all have injoined them. Not only the falſe religions, I ſay, thoſe of human invention, but likewiſe the true religions thoſe of divine origin and extraction have all had their poſitive inſtitutions. The Jewiſh religion abounds with them; and before the law was circumciſion, before the flood were ſacrifices, and even in paradiſe man was not without a poſitive inſtitution and command not to eat of the forbidden fruit. And why then ſhould it ſeem ſtrange or unaccountable that the Chriſtian religion is not altogether without poſitive inſtitutions?

Thoſe of the Chriſtian religion are few in number, and not in the leaſt burdenſome. The general rule is, (1 Cor. XIV. 40.) "Let all "things be done decently and in order," leaving it to men to determin in their ſeveral ages and countries what is decent and orderly. The only particular inſtitutions are the two ſacraments:: And what can be eaſier than theſe? the one to initiate us into the Chriſtian religion; the other to profeſs our continuance in the ſame:: by the one we are admitted

admitted into the Church of Chriſt; by the other we live in communion with it: by the one we make a ſolemn vow and covenant to live as becomes Chriſtians; and by the other we repeat and renew that vow and covenant. As Annibal was by his father ſworn at the altar a mortal foe to Rome, ſo we ſhould at the altar likewiſe become ſworn enemies to all manner of ſin and wickedneſs. Here are no coſtly ſacrifices, here are no painful operations; and how can we refuſe to pay the tribute of ſuch eaſy obedience? One may properly apply in this caſe the words ſpoken to Naaman the Syrian, (2 Kings V. 13.) "If the "prophet had bid thee do ſome great thing, wouldſt thou not have "done it? how much rather then when he ſaith to thee Waſh and be "clean," be baptized and receive the holy ſacrament of the body and blood of Chriſt?

3dly. There was a proper occaſion for introducing the ſacraments into the Chriſtian religion, and they are apt repreſentations of what they were deſigned to repreſent. It is certain, our bleſſed Lord might have inſtituted what rites and ceremonies he pleaſed; but he graciouſly condeſcends to the prejudices of mankind, and chooſes to adopt ſome received uſages and cuſtoms rather than inſtitute any thing new of his own. Now it is well known that waſhings and purifications were no ſmall part of the religion of the ancient Heathens; and among the Jews it was uſual to admit their proſelytes by baptiſm, which ceremony had been made ſtill more familiar to them by the practice of John the Baptiſt. It is well known too, that bread and wine were in uſe among all nations in their religious worſhip; and it was no very great change to ſubſtitute the Lord's ſupper in the room of the Paſchal ſupper, eſpecially as it had been the cuſtom with the Jews to eat bread and drink wine in an euchariſtical way long before our Saviour's time. Now here I ſay was a proper occaſion for introducing the ſacraments into the Chriſtian religion; neither could the profeſſors of any religion object to them, becauſe all religions had the ſame ceremonies or ſomething like the ſame.

They are likewiſe apt repreſentations of what they were deſigned to repreſent. Water is a natural emblem of purity, and the waſhing or

baptizing

baptizing with water of the waſhing and cleanſing us from our ſins. The bread broken is a lively emblem of Chriſt's body broken for us, and ſo is the wine poured out of his blood ſhed for the remiſſion of ſins. And theſe though they are ſuch ſignificant, yet at the ſame time are ſuch plain ſymbols, as one would think were incapable of ever being applied to ſuperſtition and idolatry. Images, pictures, relics, and ſuch like memorials have frequently proved the occaſions of the weakeſt ſuperſtitions and of the groſſeſt idolatries; but who would ever imagin it poſſible for ſuch plain elements as water and bread and wine to be abuſed to ſuch purpoſes? It is true the Church of Rome notwithſtanding hath ſo abuſed them; but the abuſe is therefore the more notorious, their folly the more palpable, the greater their guilt and the heavier their condemnation.

4thly. Though the things are indifferent in themſelves, yet they are highly moral, highly religious in their ends and uſes. The end of baptiſm, or the thing ſignified by baptiſm, is (as our Church Catechiſm expreſſeth it) a death unto ſin and a new birth unto righteouſneſs. As our bodies are waſhed with water; ſo our ſouls ſhould be waſhed and purified by the blood of Chriſt: As we are baptized and buried in water, and riſe again as it were out of it; ſo we ſhould die and be buried to ſin, and riſe again as it were to newneſs of life. "Know ye not," ſaith the apoſtle, (Rom. VI. 3, 4.) "that ſo many of us as were baptized into Jeſus Chriſt, were bap-
"tized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by bap-
"tiſm into death, that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the dead
"by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in new-
"neſs of life." Theſe expreſſions allude to the ancient method of baptizing which was by immerſion or dipping the whole body in water, the method uſed at preſent (and eſpecially in theſe colder climates) is only ſprinkling with water, the word baptiſm ſignifying both the one and the other: but the moral obligation is the ſame, and the inward effect is the ſame, however the outward ceremony be performed.

The ends and uſes of the Lord's ſupper are two according to ſcripture; the principal one to commemorate the death of Chriſt, (1 Cor. XI. 24, 26.) "This do in remembrance of me;" and "As "often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye do ſhow the "Lord's death till he come:" the other to teſtify our communion with Chriſt as the head, and with one another as the members, which argument St. Paul purſues at large in the Xth and XIth Chapters of his 1ſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians. Vain men may imagin more ends and uſes; but Chriſt and his apoſtles, who ſhould certainly know beſt, mention only theſe two. And theſe two are ſufficient; the one expreſſing our gratitude to God and Chriſt, and the other teſtifying our love to the brethren; the one an act of thankſgiving, and the other an act of charity. And thus it appears that the ſacraments, though they are not ſtrictly ſpeaking moral duties, yet are great helps to morality.

5thly and laſtly. The benefits annexed to them are not annexed to the bare reception of them, but to the devout and worthy reception. Whatever God commands, he annexes always his grace and bleſſing to the performance. He hath inſtituted the ſacraments, and conſequently his bleſſing attends the ſacraments; not that we muſt imagin the ſacramental elements can of themſelves convey the bleſſing of God; but certainly if he pleaſes God may make them the inſtruments of conveying it: as the waters of Jordan had not in themſelves the virtue to cure Naaman's leproſy, but were made ſo medicinal by the divine appointment. It is to be feared that ſeveral Chriſtians uſe the ſacraments only in the nature of charms, content themſelves with the *opus operatum*; and ſo they are but baptized and now and then communicate, reckon that a world of graces and benefits are conferred upon them. But the baptiſm that ſaveth us, as St. Peter ſpeaketh, (1 Pet. III. 21.) is not the bare outward ceremony "the putting away of the filth of the fleſh," but the inward moral qualification "the anſwer of a good conſcience to-"wards God." And of the Lord's ſupper it is ſaid expreſly, (1 Cor. XI. 29.) "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth

"and

" and drinketh damnation," that is ſome temporal judgment, " to " himſelf." The qualifications requiſite for the worthy reception of the Lord's ſupper are repentance, faith, and charity; to repent truly of our ſins paſt, and effectually to reſolve againſt the like for the future; to have a lively and ſtedfaſt faith in Chriſt our Saviour, with a thankful remembrance of his death and paſſion; and to be in perfect charity with all men, forgiving others as we wiſh and expect to be forgiven ourſelves: ſo ſhall we be meet partakers of this holy communion, and be filled with God's grace and heavenly benediction. A good life is the beſt preparation for this as well as for all other religious offices; and if with a good conſcience we can repeat the Lord's prayer, we may with a good conſcience alſo receive the Lord's ſupper. In a word what St. Paul ſaith of circumciſion is very applicable to the Chriſtian ſacraments: (Rom. II. 25.) " Circumciſion verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou " be a breaker of the law, thy circumciſion is made uncircumci- " ſion:" And ſo the Sacraments verily profit, if thou obey the goſpel; but if thou obey not the goſpel, thy baptiſm is made no baptiſm, thy communion no communion.

After all our bleſſed Saviour, in whom were " hid all the trea- " ſures of wiſdom and knowlege," (Col. II. 3.) might have infinitely wiſer and better reaſons than theſe for the inſtitution of the ſacraments: but yet theſe I hope are ſufficient to ſhow us the reaſonableneſs and expediency of them, and at the ſame time may reprove the folly and wickedneſs of thoſe, who take from them as the Quakers and ſome Sectaries do on the one hand, or add to them as the Romaniſts do on the other. The former reduce the ſacraments to figure and allegory; but certainly if the paſſages relating to them are not to be underſtood litterally, there is nothing to be underſtood litterally in the whole ſcripture; if what is ſaid of them is figure and allegory, all is figure and allegory. The latter increaſe the number of the ſacraments to ſeven; but there was no mention of ſeven ſacraments before Peter Lombard a writer in the twelfth century, and with as much reaſon and with as good authority as they make them *ſeven* they may

make them *ſeventy times ſeven.* What Chriſt hath inſtituted, that we ſhould religiouſly obſerve, neither diminiſhing ought from it nor adding to it; and to do either the one or the other is as I may ſay high treaſon againſt the ſovranty of God; this in the Church is much ſuch an offenſe to the divine majeſty as clipping and coining to the king's majeſty in the ſtate.

Thoſe who object to poſitive inſtitutions generally pretend to be great patrons of morality: but is any thing a greater part of morality than to obey God in whatever he ſhall pleaſe to command? And let us not vainly imagin, that we could deviſe other rites and ceremonies which might do as well or better than theſe; for this would be like Naaman, to whoſe ſtory we have more than once alluded in this diſcourſe already, as it is very applicable to the caſe before us. (2 Kings V.) Naaman was a leper, as all we are ſinners. For the cure of his leproſy he was ordered by the prophet to waſh ſeven times in the river Jordan; and for the remedy of our ſins we are commanded by Chriſt to be baptized with the baptiſm of repentance, and to celebrate the holy Euchariſt. Vain men may object to theſe commands of our Saviour, as Naaman did to the prophet's; and fondly think that other inſtitutions might do better, as he did that other waters would ſooner cure his leproſy; "Are not Abana and Pharpar rivers of Damaſcus better than "all the waters of Iſrael? May I not waſh in them and be clean? So "he turned and went away in a rage." But doth it become us to diſpute the divine commands or to obey them? "If the prophet had bid "thee do ſome great thing," If Chriſt had bid thee do ſome great thing, "wouldſt thou not have done it? how much rather then when "he ſaith to thee Waſh and be clean?" Naaman obeyed the prophet's command, and was cured of his leproſy; and let us duly obey our Saviour's commands, and we ſhall find peace to our ſouls, pardon for the paſt and grace for the future.

The ſacrament of baptiſm indeed being the ceremony of initiation into the Chriſtian religion, is to be performed *once* only; but the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper being a ſolemn commemoration of the death of Chriſt and a communion with Chriſtians, it is greatly to be wiſhed that with the ſervice a little abbreviated it was made part of our *daily* worſhip,

worſhip, as it was in the purer and better times of Chriſtianity, or at leaſt that it was to be celebrated *every Sunday*, for "as often as we eat this "bread and drink this cup we do ſhow the Lord's death till he come." But ſince the manners of the age will not eaſily allow of this, let us not fail to communicate however as often as we have opportunity, and not imagin that receiving once or twice in a year, and much leſs that conforming only for a place will be ſufficient. They muſt be nominal only and not real Chriſtians, who can turn their backs upon their Lord's table, and ſlight ſo diſtinguiſhing and eſſential a part of Chriſtian worſhip. The requeſt of a dying friend hath great weight with every perſon of the leaſt humanity; and ſhall we be guilty of ſuch monſtrous ingratitude as to neglect the commands of our dying Saviour? (John XV. 13, 14) "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay "down his life for his friends; Ye are my friends," ſaith he, "if ye "do whatſoever I command you."

DISSERTATION XXIX.

On the INFIDELITY of the JEWS.

NEVER was greater love ſhown to mankind than in God's ſending his only-begotten Son into the world, and never was love ſo ill received, ſo ill requited. Never was more undeſerved kindneſs on one ſide, and never more foul ingratitude on the other. The Son of God cometh to his choſen people as their ſaviour, and their king, and they condemn him, as a rebel and a ſlave: He proffers them glory and immortality, and they brand him with ignominy and death. Even they, (Rom. IX. 4, 5.) "to whom pertained the adoption and the "glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the ſervice "of

" of God, and the promiſes, whoſe are the fathers, and of whom as " concerning the fleſh Chriſt came," they were the moſt forward to reject him; they were the firſt ſprings and authors of all his ſufferings. Who were furniſhed with the means and opportunities of knowing him moſt, they regarded him leaſt: who were moſt capable of diſcerning his divine perſon and character, they treated him as the worſt of impoſtors and malefactors, they reviled him, they ſcourged him, they crucified him. Nor did their malice reſt here. They not only oppreſſed him living, but traduced his memory when he was dead: they not only abuſed him in his own perſon, but ſtill farther perſecuted him in his diſciples and followers. And even at this day, however diſtreſſed, however diſperſed over the face of the whole earth, yet they all join heartily in rejecting and oppoſing the goſpel of Chriſt, in firm adherence to the Old Teſtament, and in utter averſion from the New. They look upon the Chriſtians as a moſt profane ſet of men, they ſtile us heretics and apoſtates, and in their (1) ſynagogues they pray for our ruin and extirpation.

This may appear ſomewhat ſtrange and ſurpriſing upon a ſlight and ſuperficial view of the matter, and may ſeem to reflect on the certainty and evidence of the Chriſtian religion; and therefore it will be proper, for our ſatisfaction in this point, to inquire particularly, 1ſt, What are the *cauſes* of this infidelity of the Jews? and 2dly, What *ends* and *purpoſes* of divine providence are ſerved and anſwered by it?

Our firſt inquiry is into the *cauſes* of the infidelity of the Jews. It is certain the Jews and religious proſelytes were converted to Chriſtianity at firſt in great numbers; which plainly ſhoweth that the Chriſtian religion was not deſtitute of proof or truth, and that it was not owing to want of evidence that men rejected it, but to ſome other reaſons, ſuch evidently as theſe which follow.

The Jews were a very wicked and ſinful people, and no wonder, that ſuch men ſhould not embrace a religion ſo contrary to the deſires and inclinations of fleſh and blood. Our Saviour frequently calleth them an *evil* and *adulterous* generation, a generation of *vipers* and *ſer-*

(1) See the prayers compoſed by R. Gamaliel.

pents:

pents: and their caſe muſt be very bad indeed, which could extort ſuch hard and opprobrious names from him who was meekneſs itſelf. But take an account of them in the words of their own hiſtorian and a prieſt of Jeruſalem. In his 5th book of the wars of the Jews, Joſephus ſaith, that 'They not only trampled upon all that was ſacred among men, 'but jeſted with divinity itſelf, and made no more account of the 'oracles of the prophets than of ſo many dreams and fables.' Again in his 6th Book. 'It would be endleſs to run through the hiſtory of 'their iniquities; but to compriſe all in little, I am verily perſuaded 'that there never was ſo miſerable a city, nor ſo barbarous a people 'upon the face of the earth.' Again in the concluſion of the ſame book; 'My heart is full and I cannot forbear giving it vent, I am per-'ſuaded, that if the Romans had delayed calling theſe wicked people 'to an account, this city would have been drowned or ſwallowed by 'an earthquake, or have been demoliſhed by thunder and lightning 'like Sodom, the Jews being a more wicked and atheiſtical people than 'the Sodomites themſelves.' And now what wonder is it that the goſpel ſhould meet with no better reception among ſuch monſters of iniquity? How could the voluptuous Sadducee digeſt the doctrins of mortification and ſelf-denial, of taking up his croſs and following the captain of his ſalvation through ſufferings? How could the proud and haughty Phariſee condeſcend to be meek and lowly, and from worſhipping God in ſhow learn to worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth? What methods could be taken to win thoſe, who were reſolved to quarrel with every body, would not be pleaſed with one thing or another, would neither (Matt. XI. 17, &c.) "dance" with the "pipers" nor "mourn" with the "mourners," found fault with the ſolitary and auſtere John as "having a devil," with the humane and ſociable Jeſus as being a "glutton" and a "wine-bibber?" What reaſon could prevail on them, who were never in temper to hear reaſon, who were always cloudy and ſullen, ſelf-willed and obſtinate, and were as St. Paul ſaid of himſelf (Acts XXVI. 11.) "exceedingly mad" againſt thoſe who differed from them? What more could be done for them, who had withſtood the laſt, the utmoſt means of conviction, and had rendered

dered themſelves incapable of mercy by blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt, by aſcribing the miracles plainly wrought by the power of God to the power of the devil? "No man can come to me," ſaith our bleſſed Lord (John VI. 44.) "except the Father which hath ſent me "draw him:" No man can embrace the Chriſtian religion without the help of divine grace, and divine grace is juſtly witheld from thoſe who have made themſelves unworthy of it. In a word, a judicial infatuation had ſeiſed the Jews, their eyes were ſo blinded and their hearts ſo hardened, that they could not (John XII. 40.) "ſee with their eyes "and underſtand with their hearts, and be converted and healed."

Some even among the chief rulers believed on Chriſt, who yet were aſhamed to make open profeſſion of him, and, like Nicodemus, came to their maſter privately and by night. And to be ſure, the common people would not pretend to be wiſer than their teachers. They would not be forward to take upon them a new religion, which they imagined none of their betters had eſpouſed before them. "Have any of the "rulers or of the phariſees believed on him?" (John VIII. 48.) was a powerful argument among thoſe, who were influenced by great names and led blindfold by reverend authority.

There likewiſe aroſe many falſe Chriſts and falſe prophets about the time of our Saviour, and drew away much people after them. And even they, who were too wiſe to lend an ear to theſe impoſtors, would yet, many of them, grow unreaſonably ſuſpicious, and miſlead themſelves for very fear of being miſled by others. Seeing ſo many cheats abroad they would be apt to look upon all men as cheats, and reject the true Meſſiah among ſo many falſe ones.

The Jews had alſo entertained unreaſonable prejudices againſt our Saviour, and were offended at the meanneſs of his life and ignominy of his death. The prophets had made uſe of the loftieſt images to ſet forth the glories of the Meſſiah, and in deſcribing his ſpiritual kingdom had borrowed their metaphors from the kingdoms of men. What was thus ſpoken figuratively, the doctors of the Jews had expounded litterally; and theſe traditionary expoſitions being handed down from generation to generation bred in the Jews a notion of a mighty temporal

poral prince; a notion highly pleaſing, no doubt, to a people whoſe affairs were in the decline, and whoſe polity ſeemed to be tending toward a diſſolution. Big with this expectation the Jews knew not Jeſus for their Meſſiah, nor diſcerned the brightneſs of his glory through the cloud which an humble fortune had caſt over him. They looked for a prince of they knew not what high extraction; but as for Jeſus they took it for granted that he was the *carpenter's ſon.* They had learned from their prophets that Bethlehem was to be the place of their Meſſiah's nativity, but Jeſus living at Nazareth they haſtily concluded that there too he was born, and that "no good thing could come out of "Galilee." They were pleaſing themſelves with gaudy dreams of greatneſs, with the proſpect of conqueſt and empire; but he declared that "his kingdom was not of this world," and accordingly he taught them not how to ſhake off the Roman yoke, but how to free themſelves from the greater yoke and tyranny of ſin, not how to triumph over foreign enemies, but how to ſubdue their domeſtic adverſaries, their luſts and vices. They hoped to enjoy certain rights and privileges above the reſt of mankind; but he came to break down the wall of partition, and to unite Jews and Gentiles as one body under one head. They expected to become lords of the nations and to have Jeruſalem their ſeat of empire; and were ſhocked to hear that their city and temple would be deſtroyed, and that "all who live godly in Chriſt Jeſus muſt ſuffer "perſecution." At laſt when they ſaw him die an ignominious death, that very thing was enough to cancel all his miracles, and to convince them that he could not be their Meſſiah, little conſidering that he was "the lamb of God," which was thus "to take away the ſin of the "world."

Theſe I take to have been the principal *cauſes* of the infidelity of the Jews at firſt. Nor is it difficult to conceive what may be the reaſons of their perſiſting in the ſame infidelity now. On the part of the Jews there is ſomething contributes to it, and ſomething again on the part of the world. On the part of the Jews, moſt of the ſame, if not all the ſame reaſons, which gave birth to their infidelity, nouriſh it, their wickedneſs, their avarice, their pride, their obſtinacy, the falſe Chriſts

and falſe prophets who ever and anon have riſen among them, and their vain hopes and expectations of worldly greatneſs; and beſides theſe their malice and uncharitableneſs againſt the Chriſtians, their living as it were within an incloſure, their eating and drinking and marrying all among themſelves, which ſeclude them from the moſt agreeable intercourſes of human life, and make their converſion more difficult to be compaſſed. On the part of the world the grand obſtacles to the converſion of the Jews are the prevalence of Mohammediſm and other falſe religions, the hereſies and ſchiſms of Chriſtians, their wicked lives ſo contrary to their moſt holy profeſſion, and in particular the corruptions and idolatry of the Church of Rome, and the ſeverities ſhe exerciſes upon the Jews, cruelties and exactions which are of far more force to deter men from Chriſtianity than invite them to the profeſſion of it. And to all this let me add, that we are not ardent and affectionate enough in our requeſts to the throne of grace for their converſion. We do not with St. Paul (Rom. X. 1.) make it our "hearty deſire and prayer to God, that "Iſrael may be ſaved."

Thus have we ſeen ſome account of the riſe and continuance of the infidelity of the Jews, and therefore we ought in reaſon to be the leſs ſurpriſed and offended at it. It remains that we ſhould inquire, as we propoſed, in the ſecond place, What *ends* and *purpoſes* of divine providence are ſerved and anſwered by it? Theſe without doubt are great and many, but the greateſt perhaps we can diſcover are theſe following.

By the infidelity of the Jews we gain a great number of unſuſpected witneſſes to the truth of the Old Teſtament, and by their diſperſion theſe witneſſes abound in the richeſt and moſt trading parts of the world. Had the body of the Jews been converted to Chriſtianity, they might have been ſuppoſed to conſpire with the Chriſtians in forging and corrupting the prophecies relating to the Meſſiah: but now their infidelity cutteth off all cavils and ſuſpicions of that kind, and maketh their teſtimony, like that of ſworn enemies, the more favorable the more unqueſtionable. We deſire them only to ſtand to their own evidence, and by their own confeſſion they ſhall be tried and condemned.

Again,

Again. By the infidelity of the Jews and their diſperſion conſequent of it are remarkably fulfilled many predictions of Moſes and the prophets, of Chriſt and his apoſtles; ſo that inſtead of doing diſſervice to the Chriſtian cauſe it doeth it real honor, and tendeth wonderfully to promote and advance it in the world. And after all the changes and revolutions, after all the perſecutions and maſſacres which they have ſeen and undergone theſe 1700 years, they ſtill ſubſiſt a diſtinct people in order to the completion of other prophecies, that (Rom. XI. 25, 26.) "when the fulneſs of the Gentiles is come in, all Iſrael may be "ſaved." There is nothing parallel to this to be found in hiſtory from the creation of the world down to this time, and it is no leſs than a ſtanding miracle in all ages and countries for the truth of the Chriſtian religion.

Beſides it is a great advantage to the Chriſtian religion to have been firſt preached and propagated in a nation of unbelievers, as it freeth the account of the facts from all ſuſpicion of fraud and impoſture. Deſigning men may eaſily be ſuppoſed to carry on a trick among their creatures and dependents, among thoſe of the ſame ſide and party, of the ſame profeſſion and intereſt; but how was it poſſible for a parcel of poor illiterate fiſhermen and tent-makers to ſucceed in an attempt of this nature among thouſands of ſecret ſpies and open enemies? Nothing but truth, nothing but divine truth, and upheld by a divine power, could have ſtood the trial and borne down ſo much malice and oppoſition before it.

Another advantage ariſing from the infidelity of the Jews is, that it occaſions the books of the Old Teſtament to be more ſtudied, than perhaps they would otherwiſe be. Whenever the Jews become converts to Chriſtianity, they muſt be won chiefly by arguments derived from the law and the prophets; and ſurely it is neceſſary that we ſhould in ſome meaſure underſtand the law and the prophets, before we can reaſon juſtly, and draw legitimate concluſions from them. As it is, the prophetic writings are the moſt obſcure parts of holy ſcripture, little enough read and leſs underſtood; and they would have lain ſtill more neglected, and buried in far greater obſcurity, had not the controverſies

with the Jews kept our diligence waking, and neceſſitated us now and then to ſearch into their force and meaning.

This may farther ſerve to ſhow (what is often aſſerted in holy writ) that God did not chooſe the Jews from among the nations for their own ſakes. Indeed they have been from firſt to laſt a ſtubborn and wayward ſort of people; but a greater inſtance of their obſtinacy and perverſeneſs we can no where find than in their rejecting and crucifying the Lord of glory. When their law was obligatory and in full force, then they were always falling off from it: and now they religiouſly adhere to it, when it is repealed and void. When they were in poſſeſſion of the promiſed land and lived within ſight of their temple, then they frequently revolted to the idolatry of the Heathen nations: but now when they are diſperſed in all countries and it is impoſſible to perform their temple-ſervice, they are become the greateſt bigots to their religion and expreſs the ſtrongeſt zeal and affection for it. A memorable inſtance, how much proſperity can ſoften, and adverſity harden the minds of a people!

This may alſo ſerve as a warning to us to beware of the ſame infidelity, "for if God ſpared not the natural branches, take heed leſt "he alſo ſpare not thee; becauſe of unbelief they were broken off and "thou ſtandeſt by faith, be not high-minded, but fear." The Jews and Gentiles all contribute to the glory of God, the former as monuments of his ſeverity, the latter of his goodneſs. The Jews fell and were caſt away, that the Gentiles might be received; and the Gentiles were received, that the Jews might be provoked to emulation. The Gentiles were aliens from the true religion before the coming of Chriſt, and the Jews have been ſtrangers and aliens ever ſince; ſo that God has concluded all, one time or other, in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. Theſe are the uſes to which this doctrin is applied by St. Paul, as may be ſeen at large in the XIth Chapter of his Epiſtle to the Romans.

Moreover, by this one inſtance we are plainly taught, that it is not being of this nation or that Church that ſaveth a man, but in every nation

nation in every Church (Acts X. 35.) " he that feareth God and work-
" eth righteouſneſs is accepted with him."

Finally, the caſe of the Jews may be uſeful in correcting a vain opinion which every one almoſt is ſometimes apt to entertain, That had he lived in the times of our Saviour and converſed with him perſonally, had he been an ear-witneſs to his words an eye-witneſs to his works, he ſhould have been a better Chriſtian, he ſhould have reſigned all his ſcruples, and have believed and obeyed without doubt and without reſerve. Alas! they, who are infidels now, would in all probability have been infidels then. The Jews ſaw the miracles of our bleſſed Lord, and yet believed not; (John XX. 29.) " Bleſſed are they that
" have not ſeen and yet have believed."

After all we may conclude our diſcourſe upon this head, as St. Paul doth his upon the ſame ſubject: (Rom. XI. 33, &c.) " O the depth
" of the riches both of the wiſdom and knowlege of God! how un-
" ſearchable are his judgments, and his ways paſt finding out! For
" who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counſel-
" lor? or who hath firſt given to him and it ſhall be recompenſed un-
" to him again? For of him and through him and to him are all
" things, to whom be glory for ever! Amen."

DISSERTATION XXX.

On the Sufferings of CHRIST.

NO man ever ſuffered ſo much as the beſt man that ever was in the world, the man Chriſt Jeſus. His whole life from beginning to end was one continued ſcene of doing good and ſuffering evil. His firſt breath was drawn in a ſtable, and his laſt was expired on a croſs: he

he lived in poverty and want, and died in misery and shame. (Matt. VIII. 20.) "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, "but the Son of man had not where to lay his head." In his body he was weary, and hungry, and thirsty, weeping now, and now sweating as it were great drops of blood: In his soul he had a quick sensation of evils present, and a lively apprehension of evils to come, and as he himself expresseth it, (Matt. XXVI. 38.) "was exceeding sor-"rowful, even unto death." He was persecuted by his enemies, despised by his kinsmen, betrayed and sold by one of his disciples, and deserted by them all: he was made the jest and derision of all sorts of people from princes and chief-priests down to soldiers and slaves; he was spit upon, he was buffeted, he was scourged, and to complete all he was crucified, crucified as a malefactor and a rebel. So that he might cry out in the language of the prophet, (Lam. I. 12.) "Behold "and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done "unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his "fierce anger."

Uncommon as these sufferings were, instead of engaging the pity and compassion of all, they have by many been treated with scorn and contempt, and have been made matter of objection to Christ and the Christian religion. The sufferings of Christ were (1 Cor. I. 23.) "to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks "foolishness; a stumbling-block to the Jews," who expected a mighty temporal prince and deliverer, to free their country from a foreign yoke and raise them to the empire of the world; and "fool-"ishness to the Greeks," who were full of their own philosophy and wisdom, and thought it very absurd, that so mean a person should come vested with the authority of a prophet, and that life and immortality should be preached in his name, who had suffered and died as the worst of malefactors. Some perhaps too among ourselves may entertain the meaner opinion of our Saviour's doctrin on account of the meanness of his condition. They may think it below his dignity, if he was really the Son of God, to suffer so much,

much, and below their own dignity too, to pin their faith on one, who was (Acts V. 30.) " ſlain and hanged on a tree."

But whatever men may conceive of this method of effecting our ſalvation, the ſcripture in many places emphatically ſtileth it " the " wiſdom of God :" as in the Epiſtle to the Epheſians (I. 6, 7, 8.) " To the praiſe of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made " us accepted in the Beloved; In whom we have redemption " through his blood, the forgiveneſs of ſins, according to the riches " of his grace, Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wiſdom " and prudence :" and again (III. 10, 11.) " To the intent that " now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might " be known by the church the manifold wiſdom of God, Accord- " ing to the eternal purpoſe which he purpoſed in Chriſt Jeſus our " Lord :" And (Luke XXIV. 26.) we have our Saviour himſelf ſpeaking not only as if it was proper, but alſo as if it was in a manner neceſſary. " Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things ?" And beſides thoſe which an all-wiſe God might have to himſelf, there are ſeveral reaſons for the ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt, which lie level even to our low underſtandings.

I. Jeſus Chriſt ſuffered, becauſe it was foretold that the Meſſiah ſhould ſuffer. " Thus it was written," (Luke XXIV. 46.)—and therefore " thus it behoved Chriſt to ſuffer." Here it is to be wiſhed, that we had St. Paul's diſcourſes to the Theſſalonians, (Acts XVII. 2, 3.) " wherein he reaſoned with them three ſabbath days " out of the ſcriptures, opening and alleging that Chriſt muſt needs " have ſuffered." If we ſeek for *types* of this, we have Iſaac and Joſeph, the brazen ſerpent and the paſchal lamb; if we ſeek for *expreſs prophecies*, we have the whole XXIId Pſalm, and the whole LIIId chapter of Iſaiah.

The ſufferings of Chriſt are drawn not only in general terms, but the particular circumſtances alſo are delineated and deſcribed. Was Jeſus betrayed by one of his diſciples who partook with him in his laſt ſupper? David ſpeaketh as in the perſon of the Meſſiah, (Pſal. XLI. 9.) " Yea mine own familiar friend in whom I truſted, who

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" did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel againſt me." Was Jeſus ſold to the chief prieſts for 30 pieces of ſilver? The very ſame ſum is ſpecified by the prophet Zechariah for the price of the Meſſiah, (Zech. XI. 12.) " they weighed for my price 30 pieces of " ſilver." Did the Jews ſcourge Jeſus, and buffet him, and ſpit on his face? The prophet Iſaiah perſonating the Meſſiah declares, (Iſ. L. 6.) " I gave my back to the ſmiters, and my cheeks to them " that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from ſhame and " ſpitting." Was Jeſus affixed to the croſs by nails which pierced through his hands and his feet? David in the perſon of the Meſſiah complains (Pſal. XXII. 16.) " They pierced my hands and my feet." Was Jeſus crucified between two thieves one on the right hand and the other on the left? The Meſſiah, as the prophet Iſaiah informs us, (Iſ. LIII. 12.) was to be " numbered with the tranſgreſſors." Did the Jews give Jeſus vinegar to drink mingled with gall? David again perſonates the Meſſiah and complains, (Pſal. LXIX. 21.) " They gave me gall for my meat and in my thirſt they gave me " vinegar to drink." Several other circumſtances (the piercing of his ſide by a ſpear, the not breaking his bones with thoſe of the other malefactors, the parting of his garments and the caſting of lots for his veſture) were as particularly foretold, and as particularly fulfilled: and the prophet Daniel (Dan. IX. 26.) pointeth out the time, when Meſſiah the prince ſhould be cut off, and accordingly our Jeſus was cut off at that very time. And thus, as St. Peter ſpeaketh, (Acts III. 18.) " Thoſe things which God before had ſhowed by " the mouth of all his prophets, that Chriſt ſhould ſuffer, he hath " ſo fulfilled." Jeſus himſelf frequently told his diſciples how many things he ſhould ſuffer, ſo that his ſufferings were requiſite as well to verify his own words as to fulfil the ancient prophecies. With them it is poſſible he may be the Meſſiah, but it is abſolutely impoſſible he ſhould be the Meſſiah without them.

II. Another reaſon for the ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt was, that he might the better accompliſh the great work of our ſalvation. It was requiſite for him to ſuffer, becauſe he was in the place and ſtead of

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us who had deſerved to ſuffer. We were ſinners, and therefore he ſuffered as a ſinner; we were malefactors, and therefore he died as a malefactor, for (Iſ. LIII. 6.) "God laid on him the iniquities of "us all." It was requiſite for him to ſuffer, that he might (Gal. III. 13.) "redeem us from the curſe of the law being made a curſe "for us," that he might (Heb. IX. 26.) "put away ſin by the ſa-"crifice of himſelf," and that (II. 14.) "through death he might "deſtroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." It was requiſite for him to ſuffer, that he might (Ibid. 17, 18.) "be "a merciful and faithful high-prieſt, for in that he himſelf hath "ſuffered being tempted, he is able to ſuccur them that are "tempted." It was requiſite for him to ſuffer, that he might purchaſe glory for himſelf as the head, and for us as the members. (Pſal. CX. 7.) "He hath drunk of the brook in the way, therefore "hath he lift up his head." (Luke XXIV. 26.) "Ought not "Chriſt to have ſuffered theſe things, and to enter into his glory?" (Heb. II. 10.) "It became him, for whom are all things and by "whom are all things, in bringing many ſons unto glory, to make "the captain of their ſalvation perfect through ſufferings."

Indeed I do not pretend to ſay that God could not ſave mankind by any other method than by the ſufferings and death of Jeſus Chriſt; for what is impotent ignorant man that he ſhould preſcribe to God, and ſet bounds to infinite power and wiſdom? but certainly the greater were our Saviour's ſufferings in the fleſh, the more was manifeſted his love towards us, the more the honor of the divine laws was vindicated, and the more was expreſſed God's hatred and abhorrence of ſin. Before men preſume to find fault with the ſufferings of Chriſt, let them deviſe any better means at once to ſatisfy infinite juſtice and diſplay infinite mercy, at once to expreſs the greateſt love to ſinners and the greateſt hatred to ſin. (Pſal. XCII. 5.) "O Lord how great thy works! thy thoughts are very deep!"

III. A third reaſon for the ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt was, that he might more fully evince the truth and divinity of the Chriſtian religion. Had not Jeſus appeared in this low and mean condition,

had He taken upon him the form of a king inſtead of the form of a ſervant, it might have given men ſome reaſon to ſuſpect, that his views were not ſpiritual but temporal, not to ſave others but aggrandize himſelf, and that though he profeſſed to do all for the glory of God, yet he really intended his own glory: but now how could Jeſus, or any man, prove his ſincerity more than by refuſing the people when they would have made him king, (John VI. 15.) and not only ſo but by undergoing the greateſt ſufferings and at laſt laying down life itſelf.

As the ſufferings of Jeſus prove his own ſincerity, ſo likewiſe the ſincerity of his followers. Had Jeſus been born a great temporal prince, and lived in worldly pomp and majeſty, he would have dazzled the eyes of men and have gained more followers indeed, but what followers? a train of courtly hypocrits and ſervile flatterers: but now how could Jeſus prove the ſincerity of his followers more than by ſuffering himſelf and declaring to them that they too muſt ſuffer in like manner? And this, I ſuppoſe, was the reaſon, that firſt tempted Judas to betray him. It is probable Judas would have been as firmly attached to his maſter as any diſciple of them all, had his maſter had any places and preferments of honor and profit to confer upon him; but finding his maſter's kingdom was not of this world and being too himſelf fond of money he ſtaggered in his allegiance, and ſince he was likely to get nothing by faithfully adhering to his maſter, he was induced to try the other expedient, and ſee what he could get by treacherouſly betraying and ſelling him.

To theſe conſiderations let me add, the greater was the weakneſs of Jeſus, the more was the ſtrength of God made perfect in his weakneſs; the leſs his natural abilities, the more opportunities he had of diſplaying his ſupernatural powers. He was a man of no learning and education, and therefore it was the more wonderful for him to have "that wiſdom and ſpeak as never man ſpake." He had not wherewithal to ſupply the neceſſities of thoſe who followed him, and therefore he fed five thouſand men beſide women and children

dren with five loaves and two fiſhes, and at laſt when all were ſatisfied there remained more proviſion than there was at firſt. He was poor and had not wherewithal to pay tribute, and therefore a piece of money was miraculouſly provided in a fiſh's mouth for himſelf and for Peter. He was in agony in the garden, and therefore there appeared unto him "an angel from heaven ſtrengthening "him." He was crucified, and therefore all nature mourned as it were at his departure. The ſun was darkened, the earth ſhook, the rocks rent and the dead aroſe. And thus his wants and his ſufferings ſerved the more to diſplay his divine power, as well as proved his own ſincerity and the ſincerity of his followers, and by theſe means, as I ſaid before, more fully evince the truth and divinity of the Chriſtian religion.

IV. A fourth and the laſt reaſon I ſhall mention for the ſufferings of Jeſus Chriſt was, that he might ſet the better and more familiar example of all virtue. Had Jeſus lived at eaſe and abounded with the good things of life, half his virtues would have lain concealed for want of proper opportunities to exert them. He could not then have exerciſed and diſplayed to ſo much advantage that wonderful ſerenity and chearfulneſs of temper, that condeſcending meekneſs and patience, that heroical magnanimity and forgiveneſs, in all things that entire ſubmiſſion and reſignation to the will of his Father: But now how much greater doth He appear in his ſufferings than the greateſt prince in his ſucceſſes and triumphs, how has he confounded the little pride and pageantry of the world, and evinced that true greatneſs conſiſts not in greatneſs of fortune but in greatneſs of ſoul? how experimentally has he proved, that a man may be innocent and yet afflicted, and afflicted and yet innocent? how inſtructively has he taught us not only how to live, but alſo (what is harder) how to die?

It is no wonder for a man to be eaſy himſelf, when his circumſtances are eaſy; the trials of patience, the touchſtones of virtue are afflictions, are neceſſities, are reproaches, are perſecutions and ſufferings, tortures and death. And without doubt, the heavier the

burden, the more excellent the virtue that patiently beareth it; the more and oftner the metal is tried in the fire, the finer and more precious that, which loſeth nothing of its weight and cometh out again without any diminution. But it may be aſked, Are there not virtues proper to thoſe who move in a high ſphere, as well as to thoſe who move in a low one? Without doubt there are, but what virtues could Jeſus have diſplayed in a high ſtation, which he hath not diſplayed in his mean one? and certain it is, in his mean ſtation he hath exerted ſeveral virtues, which he could not poſſibly have exerted in a high one. The virtues of high and low, of rich and poor were in him all united, and exerciſed together in the greateſt perfection. Beſides a character in low condition is more familiar and imitable by greater numbers, for princes and great men are few in compariſon with the bulk of mankind, and Chriſtians in particular were to follow "the captain of their ſalvation" through ſufferings, and "through much tribulation were to enter into the "kingdom of God."

Neither would our Saviour's doctrin have been of that uſe and authority, had not he himſelf condeſcended to put it into practice, and enforced it by his own example. A man living at eaſe and flowing with wealth, whoſe every want is ſupplied, whoſe every deſire is indulged, is by no means ſo proper and lively a preacher of meekneſs and patience and reſignation to the will of God, as one who "when he is reviled "revileth not again, when he ſuffereth threateneth not," and in his greateſt agonies "committeth himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly" with a "not my will but thine be done." Are we not affected and tranſported more with thoſe admirable exhortations to patience and contentment from Epictetus who lived and died a ſlave, than with all the magnificent ſayings to that purpoſe by Seneca and Antoninus, one of them a rich prime miniſter and the other a great Roman Emperor? Our Saviour's great moral precepts were ſubmiſſion to the will of God, denial of ourſelves, and love and charity even to thoſe who deſpitefully uſe us and perſecute us; and certainly it was proper for him to practiſe what he taught, to ſhow that he taught nothing impracticable.

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Some even of the heathen philoſophers have thought it neceſſary for a *meſſenger of God*, a *perfect pattern of righteouſneſs* to appear in a low and ſuffering condition. Plato in the ſecond book of his Republic, and Arrian in his diſcourſes upon Epictetus, ſpeak expreſly to this purpoſe, ſo expreſly that one would almoſt think, the former propheſied of our Saviour, and the latter took his idea of a miniſter of God from the words of the goſpel.

Thus I have endevored by four different arguments to prove, that Chriſt ought to have ſuffered. "Ought not Chriſt to have ſuffered "theſe things?" And from theſe four ſpeculative points of diſcourſe will naturally flow as many practical inferences, which I ſhall but open without farther inlargement upon them.

1. As Jeſus Chriſt ſuffered to fulfil the ancient prophecies, we ſhould not be ſcandalized at his ſufferings, having had ſuch early notice of them, and knowing that he could not pretend to be the Meſſiah without them: On the contrary we ſhould magnify and adore the wiſdom and power of God in foretelling things particularly ſo many ages beforehand, and then in bringing to paſs ſo wonderfully (Acts IV. 28.) "whatſoever his hand and his counſel had determined before to be done."

2. As Jeſus Chriſt ſuffered for our ſalvation, what thanks can we pay unto the Lord for this ineſtimable benefit? (John XV. 13.) "Greater "love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his "friends:" but "God (Rom. V. 8.) commendeth his love towards us, "in that while we were yet enemies Chriſt died for us." What thanks I ſay, can we pay unto the Lord for this ineſtimable benefit? (Pſal. CIII. 1, &c.) Shall not "our ſouls bleſs the Lord, and all that is within us bleſs his holy name, who thus forgiveth all our iniquities and "healeth all our diſeaſes, who redeemeth our lives from deſtruction, "and crowneth us with loving kindneſs and tender mercies?" Let us offer him not only the tribute of our lips but of our lives alſo. Chriſt ſuffered for our ſalvation and ſhall we defeat the end of his ſufferings? Chriſt died for us, and ſhall we think much of living to him? (1 Cor. VI. 19, 20.) "We are not our own, we are bought with a price; let

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" us therefore glorify God in our bodies and in our ſpirits which are " God's."

3. As Jeſus Chriſt ſuffered for the truth of our religion, we ſhould not be aſhamed of ſuffering for it too. (Matt. X. 24.) " The diſci- " ple is not above his maſter, nor the ſervant above his Lord." God be thanked, we enjoy halcyon days in compariſon with the primitive Chriſtians; we are not expoſed to the like ſtorms and tempeſts with them; but if ever we ſhould undergo the ſame trials and perſecutions, I hope the grace of God would enable us to exert the ſame conſtancy and courage. They are Chriſtians in pretence only and not in reality; they receive the word on a rock as it is in the parable of the ſower (Luke VIII. 13.) " and have no root, who for a while believe and in " time of temptation fall away." (Heb. XII. 3.) " Let us therefore " hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith without wavering, and conſider " him that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt " we be wearied and faint in our minds."

4thly and to conclude, as Jeſus Chriſt ſuffered to ſet us the better example, we ſhould be the more careful to follow that example. Let us not murmur and repine, if our day of life happens to be gloomy and overcaſt; the ſun of righteouſneſs himſelf aroſe in clouds and ſet in blood. Our ſorrows can never equal his ſorrows; and he ſuffered for the ſins of others, and ſhall we think it hard to ſuffer for our own ſins? No; (Heb. XII. 1, 2.) " let us run with patience the race that " is ſet before us, looking unto Jeſus the author and finiſher of our " faith, who for the joy that was ſet before him endured the croſs de- " ſpiſing the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right-hand of the throne " of God:" knowing this too, that if we partake of his ſufferings we ſhall alſo partake of his glory, (Rom. VI. 5.) " if we be planted in " the likeneſs of his death, we ſhall alſo be in the likeneſs of his re- " ſurrection."

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DISSERTATION XXXI.

On the RESURRECTION of CHRIST.

SUCH is the goodneſs of Almighty God, that what things are neceſſary to be known are always eaſy to be known; and for thoſe facts which are of the greateſt importance, we have the beſt and greateſt evidence. No matter of fact was ever more neceſſary to be believed than the reſurrection of Jeſus, and no matter of fact was ever better atteſted. For the witneſſes of this fact were many in number, and they were neither deceived nor deceivers; but could they have been deceived themſelves, or would they have deceived others, yet it was morally impoſſible for them to ſucceed, and the deceit muſt one way or other have been detected and expoſed.

They were not deceived themſelves, for they doubted of the thing at firſt, and afterwards they were not won over to the belief of it without the fulleſt conviction. They ſaw Jeſus after his reſurrection not once only nor in a tranſient manner, but for *forty* days together, and knew him to be alive by *many infallible proofs*. They had the teſtimony and aſſurance not only of one ſenſe, but almoſt of all the ſenſes; they ſaw him with their eyes, they heard him with their ears, with their hands they handled him, and they taſted of the bread and fiſh which he gave them; he ate and drank with them, he converſed with them, he explained to them the ſcriptures, he worked miracles before them himſelf, and indued them with power from on high to work the like miracles. The fondeſt enthuſiaſt could not be deceived in theſe particulars, but ſuppoſing one man could be deceived, could all the apoſtles, could *above five hundred* brethren at once? If in this caſe they could not be certain, there is no certainty of ſenſe in any caſe.

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As they were not deceived themſelves, ſo neither did they deceive others; for they were men of the ſtricteſt virtue and probity, and they ratified the truth of what they aſſerted by their oaths, by their miracles, by their ſufferings and by their deaths. Many a man has died a martyr for a falſe opinion, but whoever died a martyr for a falſe fact, and that he knew to be falſe; eſpecially too when confeſſing the falſhood would have ſaved his life and promoted him to honor? If the apoſtles were deceivers, they muſt have been deceivers, either out of ſome worldly motive, or through the force of enthuſiaſm: but that they had no worldly motive is evident from all they did and all they ſuffered, and their ſayings and writings manifeſtly prove that they had not the leaſt tincture of enthuſiaſm. There was not only nothing in the world to animate them to this undertaking, but every thing to diſcourage them from it: and men in their circumſtances would be tempted rather to diſown the truth where it was, than to pretend it where it was not.

But could they have been deceived themſelves, or would they have deceived others, yet it was morally impoſſible for the deceit to paſs undiſcovered. Conſidering the precautions of the Jews, the ſepulchre made ſure, the ſtone ſealed and the watch ſet; conſidering the apoſtles publiſhed the reſurrection of Jeſus in the place where it happened, and ſoon after the time when it happened; conſidering their enemies had reaſons of ſtate which made them willing, and power and authority in their hands which made them able, curiouſly to pry and examin into things; it was neither probable that any fraud ſhould be contrived, nor, if it was contrived, poſſible that it ſhould take effect. Could ſo many men be concerned in ſo vile a plot, could above five hundred be let into the ſecret, and not one either out of honeſty or out of intereſt inform of the reſt? Could men of no courage and addreſs, no repute and authority prevail in ſuch an attempt againſt all the power and policy of the world? Falſhood could never have ſtood the trial, but *truth is great and will prevail.*

But this is a point, in which, I hope, we are all thorowly ſatisfied, and which indeed is to be taken for granted rather than to be proved to Chriſtian readers. And to thoſe who are thorowly ſatisfied and perſuaded

ſuaded of the reſurrection of Jeſus, it will be of greater advantage to inquire into the uſefulneſs and expediency than evince the truth and certainty of it. Such a miracle would never have been wrought, unleſs it had been highly proper and expedient; the courſe of nature would never have been ſo far altered but upon ſome extraordinary occaſion: And certainly if ever there was an occaſion worthy of the interpoſition of a divine power, if ever any miracle was uſeful and expedient, this was ſo both with regard to faith and with regard to practice.

I. The reſurrection of Jeſus was uſeful and expedient with regard to *faith*; for Chriſtianity reſteth on this as its foundation, this being laid our faith ſtandeth firm, this being overturned the whole ſuperſtructure muſt of neceſſity fall. With this Chriſtianity is all truth, and without this it is all dream and fable. (1 Cor. XV. 14.) "If Chriſt be not riſen, "then is our preaching vain, and your faith is alſo vain." More particularly. One principal end and uſe of the reſurrection of Jeſus was to eſtabliſh our belief that he was the Meſſiah, the Son of God. All his miracles were uſeful and expedient to confirm the truth of his divine miſſion, but this was more particularly ſo, becauſe this was more particularly foretold. To prove Jeſus the Meſſiah, it was neceſſary, that all the marks and characters of the Meſſiah ſhould viſibly unite and center in him: and one of the marks and characteriſtics of the Meſſiah was the reſurrection from the dead. As David ſpeaketh, (Pſal. XVI. 9, 10.) "My fleſh ſhall reſt in hope, for thou wilt not leave my ſoul "in hell, neither wilt thou ſuffer thine holy one to ſee corruption:" But as St. Peter argues with the Jews, (Acts II. 29, &c.) "the patri-"arch David is both dead and buried, and his ſepulchre is with us "unto this day; therefore being a prophet and knowing that God "had ſworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins accord-"ing to the fleſh, he would raiſe up Chriſt to ſit on his throne; he "ſeeing this before ſpake of the reſurrection of Chriſt, that his ſoul "was not left in hell, neither his fleſh did ſee corruption." Our Saviour himſelf frequently propheſied of his own reſurrection, and appealed to it as the great and inconteſtable ſign of his divine miſſion;

(Matt. XVI. 4.) " A wicked and adulterous generation ſeeketh after a " ſign, and there ſhall no ſign be given it but the ſign of the prophet " Jonas;" and again, when the Jews aſked him, (John II. 18, 19.) " What ſign ſhoweſt thou unto us ſeeing that thou doeſt theſe things, " Deſtroy this temple, ſaid he, and in three days I will raiſe it up." But the thing would not have been foretold, unleſs it had been judged proper and had been appointed beforehand. And indeed what could be a more proper ſign, that Jeſus was ſent from God, than this one of the greateſt of miracles. It was certainly miraculous, that Jeſus ſhould be raiſed from the dead at all; but that himſelf ſhould raiſe himſelf is ſtill more miraculous, and evidently proveth (John V. 26.) that " as " the Father hath life in himſelf, ſo hath he given to the Son to have " life in himſelf." Jeſus is *declared* to be Son of God, ὁρίζεσθαι, is *determined*, is *defined* " to be the Son of God," as St. Paul expreſſeth it (Rom. I. 4.) " by the reſurrection from the dead. He was made " of the ſeed of David according to the fleſh, and declared to be the " Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holineſs, by the " reſurrection from the dead."

Another end and uſe of the reſurrection of Jeſus was, that we might believe his exaltation and the glorious conſequences of it. (Rom. XIV. 9.) " For to this end Chriſt both died and roſe and revived, that he " might be lord both of the dead and living." His reſurrection was the firſt ſtep of his exaltation, and the commencement of his kingdom; and upon this he declared to his diſciples, (Matt. XXVIII. 18.) " All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." If Jeſus had been ſtill in the grave, and his fleſh had ſeen corruption, how could he have overcome the malice of his enemies, how could he have raiſed the drooping ſpirits of his apoſtles, and " ſpoken to them of " the things pertaining to the kingdom of God?" how could he have " aſcended up on high, and led captivity, captive and given gifts unto " men?" how as our *prophet* could he have authoriſed his doctrin for the doctrin of God? how as our *prieſt* could he have " entered into " the holy place to appear in the preſence of God for us?" how as our *king* could he rule over us, and reign " till the laſt enemy ſhall be de-
" ſtroyed?"

" ſtroyed?" His reſurrection certainly was as neceſſary to his glorification as his birth was to his humiliation: in the one he appears to be really the Son of man, in the other the Son of God.

A third end and uſe of the reſurrection of Jeſus was, that we might have the ſtronger reaſon to believe the forgiveneſs of our ſins and the juſtification of our perſons. (1 Cor. XV. 17.) " For if Chriſt be not " raiſed your faith is vain, ye are yet in your ſins:" And in another place, (Rom. IV. 25.) " he was delivered for our offenſes, and was raiſed " again for our juſtification." In his death he offered up himſelf a ſacrifice for the ſins of the world, and his reſurrection ſhoweth that ſacrifice to have been accepted. (Rom. VI. 23.) " Death is the wages " of ſin," and had Jeſus died and not riſen again, he could hardly have been diſtinguiſhed from other ſinners, and much leſs could he have aſſured us of pardon and juſtification before God. The releaſe of our ſurety is an infallible pledge and earneſt of our releaſe alſo. (Rom. VIII. 33, 34.) " Who ſhall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It " is God that juſtifieth: Who is he that condemneth? It is Chriſt " that died, yea rather that is riſen again:" Or (as the words may more conveniently be rendered and pointed) " Who ſhall lay any thing " to the charge of God's elect? God that juſtifieth? Who is he that " condemneth? Chriſt that died, yea rather that is riſen again?" Aſking the queſtion, as if nothing could be more abſurd than to imagin, that God ſhould lay any thing to our charge who juſtifieth us, that Chriſt ſhould condemn us, who died for us and is riſen again. (V. 10.) " If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death " of his Son, much more being reconciled we ſhall be ſaved by his " life."

A fourth end and uſe of the reſurrection of Jeſus was, that we might from thence have the ſtronger aſſurance of our own reſurrection. (1 Cor. XV. 18.) " For if Chriſt be not raiſed, then they which are " faln aſleep in Chriſt are periſhed." The members cannot riſe without the head, nor on the other ſide the head without the members. (1 Theſſ. IV. 14.) " If we believe that Jeſus died and roſe again, even " ſo them alſo, which ſleep in Jeſus, will God bring with him." The

reſurrection of Jeſus ſhoweth that a reſurrection is poſſible; and indeed why ſhould it ſeem a thing impoſſible that God ſhould raiſe the dead? Omnipotence ſurely can as eaſily raiſe us from the dead into life, as ſpeak us into life out of nothing. But the reſurrection of Jeſus not only ſhoweth a reſurrection to be poſſible, but maketh it too highly credible; as it is a proof of his *veracity*, for he promiſed both his own and our reſurrection, and ſince the former promiſe is fulfilled, we cannot well doubt of the accompliſhment alſo of the latter: as it is a proof of his *acceptance with God*, and ſo he will be the *meritorious* cauſe of our reſurrection, for (1 Cor. XV. 21, 22.) "ſince by man came "death, by man came alſo the reſurrection of the dead; for as in "Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all be made alive:" as it is a proof of his *power*, and ſo he will be the *efficient* cauſe of our reſurrection, for (John V. 21.) "as the Father raiſeth up the dead and "quickeneth them, even ſo the Son quickeneth whom he will." (Phil. III. 21.) "He ſhall change our vile body, that it may be fa-"ſhioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby "he is able even to ſubdue all things unto himſelf." Chriſt is ſtiled (Coloſ. I. 18.) the *firſt-born* from the dead, (Rev. I. 5.) the *firſt-begotten* of the dead, and (1 Cor. XV. 20.) the *firſt-fruits* of them that ſlept, intimating the cloſe connection which there is between his reſurrection and ours; and St. Paul not only infers our reſurrection from his, but argues yet more ſtrongly from the denial of ours to the denial of his, (1 Cor. XV. 13, 15.) "If there be no reſurrection of the dead, "then is Chriſt not raiſed, yea and we are found falſe witneſſes of "God, becauſe we have teſtified of God, that he raiſed up Chriſt, "whom he raiſed not up, if ſo be that the dead riſe not." And thus the reſurrection of Jeſus was uſeful and expedient with regard to *faith*.

II. It was likewiſe uſeful and expedient with regard to *practice*. Chriſtianity is an improvement upon the law of nature; it raiſeth morality to an higher pitch than ever it was raiſed by reaſon and philoſophy; it obligeth us to all that is preſcribed and more than is preſcribed by the law of nature; it contains ſeveral ſublime rules of duty as well

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as ſeveral myſterious points of faith; and the reſurrection of Jeſus was as uſeful and expedient to give authority to the former as to gain credit to the latter, as neceſſary to enforce the *agenda* of Chriſtianity, the things to be done, as to confirm the *credenda*, the things neceſſary to be believed. For if Jeſus roſe not again, he was not a teacher ſent from God; and if he was not a teacher ſent from God, his precepts are of no force and authority. It is juſtly ſaid, (1 Cor. XV. 14.) "if "Chriſt be not riſen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is alſo "vain;" And it might in like manner be ſaid, if Chriſt be not riſen, then is our preaching vain, and your practice in many inſtances is alſo vain. For if Chriſt is not riſen, the dead riſe not; and if the dead riſe not, what need to practiſe ſo many Chriſtian graces and virtues, what need of ſo much mortification and ſelf-denial? "Let us eat and "drink for to-morrow we die." Let us enjoy and make the beſt of this world, ſince there is nothing to be hereafter. This concluſion might be right upon ſuppoſition there was no reſurrection; but now another life and other manners are required of us in conſequence of our Saviour's reſurrection.

The reſurrection of Chriſt has great influence upon practice, as it is a ground of hope and comfort, as it is an argument for dying unto ſin and living unto righteouſneſs, for ſetting our affections on things above, for overcoming the dread of death, and for perſevering and abounding in the work of the Lord. And as theſe inſtances are derived from ſcripture, they cannot be better expreſſed than in the words of ſcripture.

The reſurrection of Jeſus is a ground of *hope* and *comfort*. It was reaſonable to hope for life and immortality before from the light of nature, but that hope is turned almoſt into certainty under the goſpel, and we have a pledge and earneſt of a reſurrection in the perſon of our Saviour. And what are all the vain tranſitory hopes of this world in compariſon with the hopes of glory and honor and immortality in the world to come? "Bleſſed therefore (1 Pet. I. 3, 4.) be the God and "Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, which according to his abundant "mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the reſurrection

" of Jeſus Chriſt from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and " undefiled, and that fadeth not away reſerved in heaven for us."

It is an argument for *dying unto ſin and living unto righteouſneſs*; and his death will be of no benefit and advantage to us unleſs we die unto ſin, nor his reſurrection unleſs we live again unto righteouſneſs. (Rom. VI. 4, &c.) " We are buried with him by " baptiſm into death, that like as Chriſt was raiſed up from the " dead by the glory of the Father, even ſo we alſo ſhould walk in " newneſs of life; for if we have been planted together in the " likeneſs of his death, we ſhall be alſo in the likeneſs of his re- " ſurrection; Knowing that Chriſt being raiſed from the dead dieth " no more; death hath no more dominion over him; for in that " he died, he died unto ſin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth " unto God; likewiſe reckon ye alſo yourſelves to be dead indeed " unto ſin, but alive unto God through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord."

It is likewiſe an argument for *ſetting our affections on things above*; and indeed why ſhould our affections be groveling here on earth, when our head is riſen and gone before us into heaven? (Col. III. 1, &c.) " If ye then be riſen with Chriſt, ſeek thoſe " things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth on the right hand " of God; Set your affection on things above, not on things on the " earth; for ye are dead and your life is hid with Chriſt in God."

Finally there cannot be a better motive for *overcoming the dread of death*, and for *perſevering and abounding in the work of the Lord.* We may through the merits of Chriſt cry out in the ſame triumphant ſtrain with the apoſtle—(1 Cor. XV. 55, &c.) " O death, where " is thy ſting? O grave, where is thy victory? The ſting of death " is ſin, and the ſtrength of ſin is the law; but thanks be to God, " which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; " therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, unmovable, al- " ways abounding in the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as ye know " that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

But the great thing of all, and the moſt conſpicuous effect of our Saviour's reſurrection, and the doctrins conſequent thereupon, is the

the belief of a future ſtate prevailing ſo generally in all Chriſtian countries, that it may with the greateſt truth be ſaid (1 Tim. I. 10.) that " Jeſus Chriſt hath aboliſhed death, and hath brought " life and immortality to light through the goſpel." *Life and immortality*, as the Hebrews expreſs it, or as we would ſay *immortal life* is brought to light through the goſpel, is not now firſt diſcovered and revealed the expreſſion doth not mean, but is more explicitly revealed, φωτιζεσθαι, *is illuſtrated* as the word properly ſignifies, is made clearer and more certain and evident under the goſpel, than it was under any former diſpenſation. For we have all the light that the Gentiles had from reaſon, and all that the Jews received from revelation; and we have beſides the additional teſtimony of a newer and clearer revelation, ſo that reaſon is improved to certainty, and revelation is advanced to perfection; and in this ſenſe the prophecy of Iſaiah may ſeem to be fulfilled, (XXX. 26.) " The light of the " moon ſhall be as the light of the ſun, and the light of the ſun " ſhall be ſevenfold in the day that the Lord healeth his people." No truth whatever can be more clearly revealed, more frequently repeated, more earneſtly inculcated than is the doctrin of a future ſtate in every book and in every page almoſt of the goſpel. It is not taught doubtfully and uncertainly, as in the writings of Plato and Cicero or any of the philoſophers, ſometimes with hope and aſſurance, ſometimes with diſtruſt and diffidence; but is fixed, ſteddy, certain, and like its divine author without " variableneſs " or ſhadow of turning." It is not delivered darkly and obſcurely, as in the writings of Moſes and the prophets, in types and figures and diſtant alluſions; but is plain, evident, undeniable, and like its divine author is the *light* and the *life* of the world. Wherever the light of the goſpel hath ſhone, the belief of a future ſtate hath prevailed univerſally. It is not the opinion of a ſingle ſect or of a few learned ſpeculative men only, but is part of the creed and profeſſion of every Chriſtian. And though the effects of this belief may not be ſo viſible now as in the primitive times of Chriſtianity, yet even

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in theſe degenerate days ordinary Chriſtians, men, women, and children, know more of a future ſtate, and are able to give a better and more rational account of it, than any of the rabbi's or philoſophers of old; ſo truly and properly may it be ſaid that "life and im-"mortality are brought to light through the goſpel."

What unreaſonable perverſe diſputers then are thoſe men, who pretend to argue that the Chriſtian religion is of no benefit or advantage to the world? What noble improvements hath it made in morality and religion beſides this that we have inſiſted upon; but if there was nothing but this, yet what an internal argument is it of the truth and excellence of the Chriſtian religion above all other religions? And what can be a more powerful recommendation of it to great and generous ſpirits? for all who are truly ſuch, have the greateſt deſires and longings after immortality. And who can be enemies to this doctrin but they who are enemies to human nature itſelf, ſtripping us of our nobleſt prerogative, and degrading us to the rank and level of "the beaſts that periſh?"

But we through the grace of God are perſuaded otherwiſe; and how great reaſon have we to thank and adore his infinite goodneſs for "calling us out of darkneſs into his marvelous light?" Ought not we to live ſo much better than all other men, as we have ſo much better promiſes than they? Ought not we above all other men to be ſuperior to all the temptations and all the afflictions of this world, knowing that "here we have no continuing city," and that "our "light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far "more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?" Ought not we above all other men to diveſt ourſelves of all fondneſs for life, to be in no fear or apprehenſion of death, but even willing to ſhift the ſcene, and exchange corruption for incorruption, mortality for immortality? Ought not we above all other men to moderate our grief for the loſs of departed friends and relations, and to "ſorrow not even "as others which have no hope," but rather to comfort ourſelves, as being perſuaded that they are taken from us only for a little time,

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and we ſhall ſoon meet again? (2 Cor. VII. 1.) " Having therefore " theſe promiſes, dearly beloved, let us cleanſe ourſelves from all fil- " thineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit, perfecting holineſs in the fear of " God."

DISSERTATION XXXII.

On CHRIST's riſing again the third Day.

OUR Saviour's reſurrection is almoſt an inexhauſtible fund for divine meditation. There is not a ſingle circumſtance but may ſuggeſt ſeveral uſeful and pleaſing reflections to us. One circumſtance particularly there is, deſerving of our more eſpecial conſideration, as being inſerted in all our creeds; and that is the *time* of his reſurrection, or his riſing again the *third day*. Our bleſſed Saviour was crucified on Friday about twelve o'clock; he expired on the croſs about three o'clock in the afternoon; and the ſame evening he was buried, becauſe (Mark XV. 42.) " it was the preparation," that is the day before the ſabbath. All Saturday or the Jewiſh ſabbath he lay in the grave; and very early on the firſt day of the week or on Sunday morning he roſe again from the dead. This circumſtance of his riſing again the third day, I ſay, deſerves to be particularly conſidered both on its *own* account and on account of its *conſequences*; on its *own* account that we may explain the reaſons of it, and reconcile it to ſome paſſages of ſcripture; and on account of its *conſequences*, as it was the occaſion of our keeping Sunday holy inſtead of Saturday, which was the Jewiſh ſabbath.

St. Paul ſaith (1 Cor. XV. 4.) that " he roſe again the third day ac- " cording to the ſcriptures." So that it may be ſaid, one reaſon of

his riſing again at that particular time was to fulfil the ancient types and prophecies. Iſaac as he was a type of Chriſt in many things, ſo particularly in this: When he was ordered to be ſacrificed, then he might be ſaid to die; his ſacrifice was a type of the ſacrifice of Chriſt; and as He was reſtored as it were to life upon the third day, ſo upon the third day Chriſt roſe again from the dead. There was another type of this in the perſon of Jonas; (Matt. XII. 40.) "for as Jonas was "three days and three nights in the whale's belly, ſo was the Son of "man to be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." There was another type of this in the ſheaf of firſt fruits; (Lev. XXIII. 10, &c.) for as the "ſheaf, the firſt fruits of the harveſt, was lifted "up and waved before the Lord on the morrow after the paſchal ſab-"bath;" ſo Chriſt, the "firſt fruits of them that ſlept," was lifted up or raiſed from the dead on the ſame day, "the morrow after the "paſchal ſabbath." According to the pſalmiſt, (Pſal. XVI. 10.) the Holy one was not to lie ſo long in the grave as to "ſee corruption;" and according to the prophet Hoſea, (VI. 2.) ſpeaking figuratively of the Jews but to be underſtood litterally of Chriſt, "After "two days will he revive us, in the *third day* he will raiſe us up and "we ſhall live in his ſight." Agreeably to theſe ancient prophecies, our Saviour frequently foretold the ſame thing in his life-time. (Matt. XVI. 21.) "From that time forth" (after that Peter had confeſſed him to be the Chriſt the Son of the living God) "began Jeſus to ſhow un-"to his diſciples, how that he muſt go unto Jeruſalem, and ſuffer "many things of the elders and chief prieſts and ſcribes and be kill-"ed, and be raiſed again the *third day*:" (—XVII. 22, 23.) Again in Galilee, after his transfiguration, "The Son of man ſhall be be-"trayed into the hands of men, and they ſhall kill him, and the *third* "*day* he ſhall be raiſed again;" (—XX. 18, 19.) Again in his way to Jeruſalem, "Behold we go up to Jeruſalem, and the Son of man "ſhall be betrayed unto the chief prieſts, and unto the ſcribes, and "they ſhall condemn him to death, and ſhall deliver him to the "Gentiles to mock and to ſcourge and to crucify him, and the "*third day* he ſhall riſe again:" And upon ſeveral other occaſions

as may be ſeen in the hiſtories of his life. Well therefore did He riſe again the third day to fulfil the *ancient* prophecies, to fulfil *his own* prophecies. His riſing again the third day or any day is wonderful, but is made ſtill more wonderful by its being ſo often ſignified and declared beforehand by the Spirit of prophecy.

But there muſt be ſome farther reaſon for his riſing again at that particular time. For if it had pleaſed God, that he ſhould have riſen again from the dead on any other day, any other day might have been foretold as well as the third day. It muſt therefore not only have been proper for him to have riſen again the third day becauſe it was foretold, but it muſt have been foretold becauſe it was proper for him to riſe again the third day. And herein the propriety or fitneſs of it ſeemeth to conſiſt, that on the one hand he might be dead long enough for no doubt to remain of the truth and reality of his death, and on the other hand he might revive ſoon enough for his body which had never known ſin never to know corruption. "The Holy One" (as indeed it was fitting in the reaſon of things and as it was foretold in ſcripture) "was not to ſee corruption:" but in all probability he would have ſeen corruption, had a longer time intervened between his death and his reſurrection. It was ſaid of Lazarus, (John XI. 39.) "Lord by this time he ſtinketh for he hath "been dead four days:" and would not this equally have been the caſe of Jeſus; would not his body have been corrupted as ſoon, if not ſooner by reaſon of his wounds, his temples having been torn with thorns, his back furrowed with ſcourges, his hands and feet transfixed by nails, and his ſide pierced by a ſpear? He roſe again therefore at the proper point of time, neither ſo ſoon as that there might remain any doubt of the reality of his death, nor ſo late as that his body might ſee corruption. Had he riſen ſooner, his enemies poſſibly might have objected that he had not been really dead; had he lain longer, his friends might have deſponded, and deſpaired of his ever riſing again. So beautifully doth God diſpoſe every thing in its time and ſeaſon!

It is true there are ſome paſſages of ſcripture, which ſeem to claſh with the account here given, with the time here defined. Chriſt ſaid in his life time, (Matt. XXVII. 63. Mark VIII. 31.) " After " three days I will riſe again;" and upon another occaſion, (Matt. XII. 40.) " As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's " belly, ſo ſhall the Son of man be three days and three nights in " the heart of the earth." Now ſtrictly ſpeaking, Chriſt did not riſe again " after three days," for he roſe again the " third day;" neither was he " three days and three nights" complete in the heart of the earth, for he was buried on Friday evening and roſe again on Sunday morning. But it will be no very difficult taſk to reconcile theſe paſſages with the others, as there is the greateſt harmony in the ſacred books of any in the world. They may ſometimes ſeem to contradict one another, but they never do ſo in reality. And both of theſe expreſſions, if we had time and leiſure for it, might be juſtified by parallel inſtances out of the beſt claſſic authors: but it may be proper to vindicate them by ſimilar paſſages in holy ſcripture.

As to the former expreſſion of riſing again *after three days*, however ſtrange ſuch an uſe of the prepoſition may appear to us, yet at that time it was eaſily underſtood for riſing again *within three days* or riſing again *the third day*, after one day and part of two others. For as Rehoboam (2 Chron. X. 5.) ſaid unto the people, " Come again " unto me *after three days*; and all the people" (ver. 12.) " came to " Rehoboam *on the third day*, as the king bade ſaying Come again to " me *on the third day*:" As Chriſt (Luke II. 46.) was found diſputing in the temple " after three days," that is *on the third day*: So the phraſe of riſing again *after three days* muſt be equivalent to riſing again *the third day*. And ſo the chief prieſts and phariſees themſelves underſtood it, for we read they came together unto Pilate (Matt. XXVII. 62, &c.) " ſaying, Sir we remember that that " deceiver ſaid while he was yet alive, *After three days* I will riſe " again, command therefore that the ſepulchre be made ſure *until* " *the third day*, leſt his diſciples come by night and ſteal him away, " and ſay unto the people He is riſen from the dead."

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As to the other expreſſion of being *three days and three nights* in the heart of the earth, it is to be noted that as among us the time of twenty-four hours is called a *day*, ſo among the Jews it is ſometimes called a *day* and ſometimes *a night and a day*, as in the Iſt Chapter of Geneſis "The evening and the morning" or *the night and the day* were the *day*. So that ſaying The Son of man ſhall be *three days and three nights* in the heart of the earth, is the ſame as ſaying The Son of man ſhall be *three days* in the heart of the earth. Now it is uſual in all languages to expreſs a *part* by the name of the *whole*, a *part of the day* by the *whole day*: And the Jews in particular were not unaccuſtomed to this manner of ſpeaking. For as a child was to be circumciſed, when he was *eight days* old, and the day of his birth was reckoned the *firſt day* though he was born ever ſo late, and the day of his circumciſion was reckoned the *eighth day* though he was circumciſed ever ſo early: As Eſther declares Chapter IV. 16. "that ſhe will faſt and neither eat nor drink *three days* "*night or day*;" and yet Chapter V. 1. "She makes a banquet on "the *third day*:" So Chriſt by the very ſame figure of ſpeaking and reckoning may be ſaid to be *three days* in the heart of the earth, and yet riſe again the *third day*.—Such critical reflections may be dry and unentertaining, but it can never be without its uſe to reconcile ſeemingly oppoſit paſſages of ſcripture one to another; that infidels may not triumph on the one hand, nor believers ſtagger on the other.

We have obſerved that our Saviour roſe again on the firſt day of the week or Sunday, and in commemoration of this wonderful event the Apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians kept *Sunday* holy inſtead of Saturday, which was the Jewiſh ſabbath. The firſt day of the week, the very day of our Saviour's reſurrection, (John XX. 10.) we find the diſciples aſſembled, and Jeſus ſtanding in the midſt of them, and bleſſing and inſtructing them. Again the very next Sunday following we likewiſe find the diſciples aſſembled (ver. 26.) "And after eight days," that is on the eighth day, "again his diſciples were within, and Thomas "was with them." Six weeks after, at Pentecoſt, we find the apoſtles aſſembled

aſſembled again on this day; (Acts II. 1, 4.) "they were all with one "accord in one place, and were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt." Afterwards the author of the Acts of the Apoſtles ſpeaketh of their aſſembling on this day as a ſettled cuſtom among them; (XX. 7.) "And "upon the firſt day of the week when the diſciples came together to "break bread, Paul preached unto them." St. Paul, referring plainly to their religious aſſemblies on this day, adviſeth the Corinthians, (1 Cor. XVI. 1, 2.) "Now concerning the collection for the ſaints as "I have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even ſo do ye, Upon the "*firſt* day of the week let every one of you lay by him in ſtore," that is put into the treaſury, "as God hath proſpered him, that there "be no gatherings when I come." St. John in his Revelation (I. 10.) calleth this day by name "the Lord's day." And in conformity to the pattern of the bleſſed apoſtles and primitive diſciples, the Chriſtian Church in all ages from the firſt to the laſt hath obſerved the ſame day inſtead of Saturday, which was the Jewiſh ſabbath.

To juſtify this change of the ſabbath made by the apoſtles, we will trace the thing from the fountain, beginning at the beginning. That man ſhould worſhip God, the creature adore the creator, is a truth evident and undeniable; and it is no leſs evident and undeniable, that as God is to be worſhipped, ſo ſome certain times ſhould be ſet apart for worſhipping him. God therefore having made the world in ſix days, ordained from the beginning, that every ſeventh day ſhould be kept holy; (Gen. II. 2, 3.) "And on the ſeventh day God ended his work "which he had made, and reſted on the ſeventh day from all his work "which he had made; and God bleſſed the ſeventh day and ſanctified "it, becauſe that in it he had reſted from all his work, which God "created and made." The ſame ordinance and the ſame reaſon for it are repeated in the fourth commandment; "Remember the ſab-"bath-day to keep it holy, for in ſix days the Lord made heaven and "earth, the ſea and all that in them is, and reſted the ſeventh day, "wherefore the Lord bleſſed the ſabbath-day and hallowed it." The deſign, the moral deſign, of the inſtitution in both places is, that *every ſeventh day* or *one day in ſeven* ſhould be exempted from the ordinary

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cares and buſineſs of the world, and more immediately dedicated to religious uſes and the ſervice of God: but which is the firſt day or which is the ſeventh day, as we cannot certainly know at this diſtance of time, may be fixed as men ſhall agree among themſelves. What was the ſeventh day of the creation was the firſt whole day of Adam's life, and the beginning of the week to him: and when God renewed the inſtitution among the children of Iſrael, he ſeemeth to have altered the day of reſt, and to have appointed the ſeventh day of the week inſtead of the firſt to be kept as their ſabbath. The command was again repeated to the Jews with an additional reaſon aſſigned for it peculiar to that people, (Deut. V. 15.) "Remember that thou waſt a ſervant "in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought thee out "thence through a mighty hand and by a ſtretched out arm; there-"fore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the ſabbath-day:" And for the better remembrance of the ſtrict *labor* to which they had been inured in the houſe of bondage, that ſtrict *reſt* was injoined them on the ſabbath, inſomuch that the man who gathered ſticks (Numb. XV.) was ordered to be ſtoned.

We ſee therefore that in the inſtitution of the ſabbath, there is ſomething of a poſitive and ſomething of a moral nature, ſomething of temporary and ſomething of perpetual obligation. What is of a moral nature and of perpetual obligation, the apoſtles could not diſpenſe with; but their hands were not ſo tied up, as to what was only of a poſitive nature and of temporary obligation. Now what is of a moral nature and of perpetual obligation is the ſetting apart of ſome certain times, at leaſt one day in ſeven, for the more immediate worſhip and ſervice of the Almighty Creator of us and all things; and this part the apoſtles have preſerved and confirmed, only they have changed the day from Saturday to Sunday; and ſurely there is no more intrinſic goodneſs in one day than in another. What was of a poſitive nature and of temporary obligation was the keeping of that ſtrict reſt on Saturday in commemoration of the deliverance out of the land of Egypt; and this part the apoſtles have canceled and aboliſhed, ſo that St. Paul joineth the obſervation of the Jewiſh ſabbath with the Jewiſh meats

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and drinks, and new-moons and holy-days, (Col. II. 16, 17.) "Let "no man therefore judge you in meat or in drink, or in reſpect of an "holy-day, or of the new-moon or of the ſabbath-days, which are a "ſhadow of things to come, but the body is of Chriſt."

It is the command of God to all men from the creation to dedicate *one day in ſeven* more particularly to his worſhip and ſervice: the Jews therefore religiouſly obſerve every *Saturday*, Pharaoh and his Egyptians having been overwhelmed in the Red Sea *on a Saturday*: the Mohammedans religiouſly obſerve every *Friday*, their prophet having made his eſcape from Mecca *on a Friday*: and we Chriſtians religiouſly obſerve every *Sunday*, our Saviour having riſen again from the dead *on a Sunday*.

Our obſervation of this day is ſufficiently authoriſed by the practice and example of the Apoſtles and primitive Chriſtians. The Chriſtian religion, as it was to aboliſh all the Jewiſh ceremonies, ſo particularly this of the *Sabbath*. It may ſeem therefore ſtrange to ſome that after repeating the fourth commandment we ſhould ſtill ſay, "Lord have mercy "upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law:" And this was one reaſon why the excellent Mr. Chillingworth refuſed to ſubſcribe to our liturgy and enter into holy orders, till after he had conſidered things more maturely and had ſatisfied himſelf in this particular: For the truth is, we pray not that we may obſerve the Jewiſh ſabbath, which is aboliſhed, but that we may dedicate one day in ſeven to the more immediate worſhip of God as the Creator of the world. Accordingly we religiouſly obſerve *one day in ſeven* in commemoration of the old creation; and this one day in ſeven with us is *Sunday* in commemoration of the new creation by Jeſus Chriſt; the Jewiſh ſabbath being as it were buried with our Saviour, and Sunday by his reſurrection being become the *Lord's day*. The Jewiſh ſabbath was no more than a type of the Chriſtian, their deliverance a type of ours; theirs from the Egyptian bondage, ours from the bondage of ſin and death; and if the former deſerved to be commemorated weekly, how much more the latter?

How highly blameable then are thoſe Chriſtians, who forſake the aſſembling of themſelves together, and will not vouchſafe even one day

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in ſeven, to bleſs their creator and commemorate their redeemer? And what can be the final end of ſuch perſons, but that "whoſoever hath "been aſhamed of him and his words in this generation, of him alſo "ſhall the Son of man be aſhamed, when he cometh in the glory of "his Father with the holy angels?" How is it poſſible for them, who refuſe to devote to him ſo ſmall a portion of their time in this life, ever to expect to be made happy with him to all eternity in the next? Every day of our lives we ought to dedicate to the worſhip and ſervice of God, as we have opportunity and ability: but one day in ſeven is particularly required of us by the laws of God, and the laws of our country: and to employ it in buſineſs is wrong, for what buſineſs can be of greater concern and conſequence to us, than the duties of religion and the ſalvation of our immortal ſouls? but to conſume it in pleaſures and diverſions is worſe, and is ſuch an abuſe of God's mercies as nothing can extenuate or excuſe. They muſt not only not be Chriſtians, but even worſe than Heathens; they muſt not only be deſtitute of all ſenſe of gratitude, but muſt be like the brute beaſts without underſtanding, and never conſider that God is their creator and preſerver, or Jeſus Chriſt their Saviour and redeemer, that he died for our ſins, and roſe again for our juſtification, and we ſhould alſo die unto ſin, and live again unto righteouſneſs. To a generous mind nothing certainly can be more pleaſing than gratitude and thankſgiving; and what can be more deſerving of our gratitude and thankſgiving than the mercies of God in Chriſt Jeſus? We may very fitly therefore take up the words of the pſalmiſt, and ſay, as ſpoken by him they were prophetic, but as applied by us they are fulfilled, (Pſal. CXVIII. 22, &c.) "The ſtone which the builders refuſed is become the head ſtone of "the corner. This is the Lord's doing, it is marvelous in our eyes. "This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be "glad in it. O give thanks unto the Lord for he is good, for his "mercy endureth for ever."

DISSERTATION XXXIII.

On our SAVIOUR's ASCENSION.

AFTER our Saviour had ſhowed himſelf alive again to his apoſtles by "many infallible proofs," and had converſed with them "forty days, ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," he "led them out as far as to Bethany, to the mount called Olivet," and there in the preſence of them all "was carried up into heaven." There are different heavens, as we learn from ſcripture; and different degrees or ſtations in heaven. The "third heaven" is mentioned by St. Paul, (2 Cor. XII. 2.) and our Saviour ſaith in St. John's goſpel, (XIV. 2.) that "in his Father's houſe are many manſions." But Jeſus aſcended to the place of the higheſt honor and dignity, and the ſtrongeſt terms poſſible are employed in ſpeaking of his exaltation. (Heb. IV. 14.) "He paſſed into the heavens," or rather διεληλυθοτα τους ουρανους, "He paſſed through the heavens;" (VII. 26.) "He was made higher "than the heavens;" (Eph. IV. 10.) "He aſcended up far above all "heavens;" as it is expreſſed in different places of ſcripture; "and "ſat on the right-hand of God."

The phraſe of "ſitting on the right-hand of God" we know very well is purely metaphorical, for God is a ſpirit without body and without parts: and conſequently as to ſit on the right-hand of the king is the place of higheſt honor and precedence among men, ſo to ſit on the right-hand of God muſt ſignify to be next in power and dominion to God himſelf. Chriſt is ſometimes ſaid to *be* on the right-hand of God, and ſometimes to *ſtand* on the right-hand of God; but the moſt uſual expreſſion is *ſitting* on the right-hand of God, to denote the full poſſeſſion, the ſecurity, and perpetuity of his dominion. By virtue of his divine nature he was indeed in heaven even while he was upon earth; but

but now he aſcended thither in his human nature, in his human ſoul and body, by local motion, of which the infinity of the divine nature is not capable. As the Son of God, he was in heaven before; but now he aſcended thither, as the Son of man. For there is not the leaſt ground or pretence for thinking with ſome ancient heretics, that his humanity was ſwallowed up by his divinity. No, the man Chriſt Jeſus who ſuffered and died here on earth, now liveth and reigneth in heaven; in the ſame nature in which he ſuffered, in the ſame is he glorified.

The aſcenſion and glorification of Chriſt muſt needs be a pleaſing ſubject of reflection to Chriſtians. The ſoul cannot but feel herſelf raiſed and exalted by ſuch meditations. It is a theme of large extent both with regard to ſpeculation and with regard to practice. Every way we may think of it with delight and improvement, whether we conſider the *types* and *prophecies* which preſignified and foretold it, or the *ends* and *reaſons* of it, or the *particular circumſtances* with which it was attended, or laſtly the *moral* and *religious uſes* which may be made of it.

I. It was certainly a ſurpriſing revolution, that he, who had ſo lately ſuffered as a malefactor and expired on a croſs, ſhould aſcend into heaven and be ſeated at the right-hand of the majeſty on high, (1 Pet. III. 22.) " angels and authorities and powers being made ſubject unto " him." But there were ſeveral notices to prepare the world for this extraordinary event, ſeveral *types* which preſignified, ſeveral *prophecies* which foretold it.

Of *types* I think the firſt and moſt ancient is Enoch the ſeventh from Adam. He was tranſlated to heaven, becauſe " he pleaſed God" as the apoſtle ſpeaketh; (Heb. XI. 5.) and was therefore a proper type of the aſcenſion of the " beloved Son, (Matt. III. 17.) in whom God was " well pleaſed."—In like manner the prophet Elijah was taken up into heaven in the preſence of Eliſha, and a portion of the maſter's ſpirit deſcended to the ſcholar: and what an exact image and repreſentation was here of our Saviour's aſcenſion into heaven in the preſence of his diſciples, and of his miſſion afterwards of the Holy Ghoſt upon them

in conſequence of it?—As the High-prieſt was in many things a type of Jeſus, ſo particularly in this, that he entred once every year into the holy place (Heb. IX. 7.) " not without blood, which he offered for " himſelf and for the errors of the people:" So Chriſt, as the inſtance is applied by the author of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews, (XI. 12.) " be- " ing come an high-prieſt of good things to come by his own blood " entred in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemp- " tion for us." The holy place into which the high-prieſt entred was a figure of heaven into which Chriſt entred; for as the ſame apoſtle ſaith afterwards (ver. 24.) " Chriſt is not entred into the holy places " made with hands which are the figures of the true, but into heaven " itſelf now to appear in the preſence of God for us."—The patriarch Joſeph was a lively type of Jeſus in his exaltation, as indeed in many other circumſtances of his life. The parallel is very remarkable between them: Joſeph, the favorite of his father, ſent to viſit his brethren, and ſold by them for twenty pieces of ſilver; Jeſus, the beloved Son of God, ſent into the world, and ſold for thirty pieces of ſilver by one of his diſciples: Joſeph, ſuffering for his innocence, in priſon between two criminals; Jeſus, alſo ſuffering for his innocence, on the croſs between two thieves: Joſeph foretelling deliverance to one of his fellow-priſoners, and denouncing death to the other; Jeſus promiſing pardon and happineſs to one of his fellow-ſufferers, and abandoning the other: Joſeph from priſon advanced next to Pharaoh, and made ruler over all the land of Egypt; Jeſus after his paſſion exalted to the right-hand of God, and (Matt. XXVIII. 10.) " all power given unto him in heaven " and in earth."—We have yet another memorable type in the exaltation of David from a low ſtate of ſuffering to a kingdom, and he ſpeaketh often of his own caſe in terms which do not ſo properly belong to him, but are rather prefigurative of the Meſſiah. (Pſal. XXI. 1, 4, &c.) " The King ſhall joy in thy ſtrength O Lord; He aſked " life of thee, and thou gaveſt it him, even length of days for ever " and ever; His glory is great in thy ſalvation; honor and majeſty " haſt thou laid upon him; For thou haſt made him moſt bleſſed for " ever;" and other paſſages there are in the ſame ſtrain and ſpirit.

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But there were not only *types* which may be thought perhaps more arbitrary and admiſſive of a greater latitude of interpretation; but there were alſo ſeveral *prophecies*, which pointed out this event more directly and plainly.—The XXIVth Pſalm was compoſed by David on occaſion of his bringing the Ark of God to the tabernacle in Mount Sion; but doubtleſs it was intended likewiſe as a prophecy of the aſcenſion of Chriſt our Lord, ſeveral verſes in it being rather more applicable to this latter occaſion than to the former, and it ſeemeth to have been underſtood ſo by the ancient Jews themſelves; (ver. 7.) "Lift up your heads "O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlaſting doors, and the King of "glory ſhall come in."—In the LXVIIIth Pſalm we have that famous prophecy, (ver. 18.) "Thou haſt aſcended on high, thou haſt led cap-"tivity captive," ſo litterally true of our Saviour's aſcenſion into heaven, and triumphing over Sin and Death and all the powers of Hell. And we may be the more certain that we miſtake not in applying the prophecy in this manner, for it is in this manner applied (Eph. IV. 8.) by St. Paul himſelf.—There is another famous prophecy in another Pſalm of David's, (Pſal. CX. 1.) "The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit "thou at my right-hand until I make thine enemies thy footſtool;" And who can this "Lord of David," this "prieſt for ever after the "order of Melchiſedek," be but the Meſſiah? So Jeſus and the Jews of his time (Matt. XXII. 44.) underſtood it, and ſo St. Peter expounds it, (Acts II. 34, &c.) "For David, ſaith he, is not aſcended into the "heavens, but he ſaith himſelf The Lord ſaid unto my Lord Sit thou "on my right-hand until I make thy foes thy footſtool; Therefore "let all the houſe of Iſrael know aſſuredly that God hath made this "ſame Jeſus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Chriſt.—One citation more will be ſufficient, and that ſhall be Daniel's viſion of the kingdom of the Meſſiah; (Dan. VII. 13, 14.) "I ſaw in the night "viſions, and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds "of heaven, and came to the ancient of days, and they brought him "near before him; And there was given him dominion and glory and "a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages ſhould ſerve him; "his dominion is an everlaſting dominion which ſhall not paſs away,

"and

" and his kingdom that which ſhall not be deſtroyed."—It was therefore neceſſary for our Saviour to aſcend into heaven in order to fulfil the *ancient prophecies*; but it was made ſtill more neceſſary, becauſe he had ſo often promiſed and foretold the ſame thing himſelf in his life-time. And after he had aſcended, the prophecies and the event, compared together, would illuſtrate and confirm each other, and ſtrengthen the faith of his diſciples.

II. Theſe were not the only *ends* and *reaſons* of our Lord's aſcenſion. It was not only fit and proper, becauſe it was foretold; but it was foretold, becauſe it was originally fit and proper, and deſigned from the beginning. And ſome of the *reaſons* of it we may collect from ſome hints given us here and there in ſcripture.—There were yet ſeveral ages to come before the end of the world and the general judgment. Him therefore (Acts III. 21.) " the heaven " muſt receive until the times of reſtitution of all things."—With regard to *himſelf* this exaltation was a juſt and proper reward of his humiliation. (Phil. II. 8, 9.) " He humbled himſelf and became " obedient unto death, even the death of the croſs, wherefore God " alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is " above every name."—With regard to his *diſciples* it was a ſtrong confirmation of their faith; a ſenſible demonſtration that he had come from God, when he went to God; and they, who had doubted of his divine miſſion before, could doubt no longer when they ſaw him aſcend thus triumphantly into heaven.—Thither he aſcended, that as our *King* he might ſubdue his enemies, and protect his ſubjects. (1 Cor. XV. 25, 26.) " For he muſt reign till he hath put all " enemies under his feet, The laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed is " death."—Thither he aſcended that as our *Prieſt* he might enter into the preſence of God and intercede for us. For (Heb. IX. 24.) " Chriſt is entred into heaven itſelf now to appear in the preſence " of God for us;" And (Heb. VII. 29.) " he is able alſo to ſave " them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him, ſeeing he ever " liveth to make interceſſion for them."—Thither he aſcended that, as our *Prophet*, he might ſend down the Holy Ghoſt to inlighten

and

and inſtruct, to ſupport and comfort us. For as he ſaid himſelf to his diſciples, (John XVI. 7.) " It is expedient for you that I go " away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto " you; but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you."—One farther end and reaſon of our Lord's aſcenſion was, as he himſelf declares, (John XIV. 3.) " to prepare a place for us, that where he is there " we may be alſo." As his reſurrection was a pledge and earneſt of our's, ſo likewiſe is his aſcenſion into heaven of our being taken up thither too. " He as the forerunner is entred for us," (Heb. VI. 20.) and at the laſt day, (1 Theſſ. IV. 17.) " we ſhall be caught up " in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and ſo ſhall we ever be " with the Lord."

III. We may not only diſcover the greateſt fitneſs and propriety in the thing itſelf, but likewiſe in the *particular circumſtances* with which it was attended. So wiſely and beautifully doth Providence diſpoſe and order events, that in the life and actions of our Saviour there is not a ſingle paſſage, there is not the leaſt circumſtance, that is not of ſome importance and ſignification.

We may obſerve that our Saviour aſcended *in the preſence of the apoſtles*; and indeed it was requiſite that to ſuch a tranſaction there ſhould be a competent number of witneſſes. The apoſtles did not ſee him in the act of his reſurrection, but they ſaw him in the act of his aſcenſion; for there was not the ſame neceſſity of their being ſpectators in the former caſe as in the latter. There was really no neceſſity at all of their ſeeing him riſe from the dead, it being to all intents and purpoſes ſufficient, if they ſaw him after he was riſen, and knew him to be alive again by " many infallible proofs." But there was a neceſſity of their ſeeing him aſcend into heaven, becauſe they could not ſee him after he was aſcended; and otherwiſe they could not have been ſuch capable witneſſes of the truth of the fact, and could have received the knowlege of it afterwards only from revelation.

It is farther obſervable, that he was taken up into heaven, while he was *bleſſing* his diſciples. (Luke XXIV. 50, 51.) " And he lift

" up

" up his hands and bleſſed them; And it came to paſs, while he " bleſſed them, he was parted from them and carried up into hea- " ven." This was very ſuitable and congruous. It was keeping up his character. It was doing in the laſt act upon earth, what he had been doing all his life before. It was exerciſing the diſpoſition, and doing the work of heaven even while he was going thither; and in this, as well as in other things, (1 Pet. II. 21.) he " left us an " example that we ſhould follow his ſteps."

The *place* from which he aſcended was the Mount of Olives, I ſuppoſe on account of its proximity to Jeruſalem. This too had been the ſcene of his paſſion, and fitly therefore was it of his aſcenſion. As the apoſtles had ſeen him here in his agony, ſo here they ſaw him enter upon his glory. And mountains as being more conſpicuous ſeem to have been, not caſually but deſignedly, the ſcenes of the moſt memorable tranſactions. Abraham was ordered to offer up Iſaac on a mountain; the law was given on a mountain; and Moſes was ordered to go up into a mountain to die; and David's tabernacle and Solomon's temple were built on mountains. We read often of our Saviour's going up into a mountain to pray; on a mountain he delivered his doctrin to the people; on a mountain he choſe his twelve apoſtles; on a mountain he was transfigured; he died on Mount Calvary, and aſcended from Mount Olivet.

There is ſomething remarkable too in the *manner* of his aſcent. It was ſlow and leiſurely, and as much unlike that of Elijah, as the ſpirit of the goſpel is different from that of the law. Elijah was taken up (2 Kings II. 11.) " by a whirlwind in a chariot of fire with horſes " of fire;" but Jeſus aſcended gently " in a cloud," and the apoſtles ſtood " gazing" and " looking ſtedfaſtly toward heaven as he went up." Elijah too ſpake doubtfully to Eliſha, whether the ſpirit ſhould deſcend upon him or not, (2 Kings II. 10.) " Thou haſt aſked a hard thing; " nevertheleſs if thou ſee me when I am taken from thee, it ſhall be " ſo unto thee; but if not, it ſhall not be ſo:" But Jeſus gave an abſolute promiſe to his diſciples, (Acts I. 5.) " Ye ſhall be baptized with " the Holy Ghoſt not many days hence." Fifty men ſearched for Elijah

Elijah three days, (2 Kings II. 16.) " leſt peradventure the Spirit of " the Lord had taken him up, and caſt him upon ſome mountain or " into ſome valley:" But the apoſtles entertained no ſuch doubts about Jeſus; they knew very well that he had come from God and went to God.

Angels alſo were witneſſes of his aſcenſion, to give the greater grandeur and ſolemnity to the thing, and likewiſe to aſſure the apoſtles of his reception into heaven, whither their eyes could not follow him. Angels had proclaimed his nativity, angels had proclaimed his reſurrection, and now they proclaimed his aſcenſion.

One farther deſign in the *manner* and *circumſtances* of our Lord's aſcenſion was to let us ſee the *manner* and *circumſtances* of his coming to judgment. He aſcended in a *cloud*, with the *holy angels*; and in like manner he will come again " in the clouds of heaven," and " the " holy angels with him." There is not only the divine teſtimony to aſſure us of it, but what hath been done may be done again. (Acts I. 11.) " This ſame Jeſus, which is taken up from you into heaven, " ſhall ſo come in like manner, as ye have ſeen him go into heaven."

IV. But there is not any article of the Chriſtian faith, that terminates only in ſpeculation, and hath not ſome influence upon practice. The doctrins of Chriſtianity are all deſigned to make us better men as well as better Chriſtians; and ſeveral *moral* and *religious* uſes may be made of this in particular which we have been explaining. We will ſpecify ſome of the principal.

One uſe that may be made of this doctrin is to teach us ſubjection and obedience to our Lord Chriſt. For he is aſcended into heaven, and ſitteth on the right hand of God, " all power being given unto " him in heaven and in earth;" and ſhall not we therefore render him the tribute of our hearts and lives, revere his doctrins, obey his precepts, deſire nothing beyond his favor, and dread nothing beyond his diſpleaſure? " He muſt reign till he hath put all enemies under " his feet:" (1 Cor. XV. 25.) Principalities and all the powers of darkneſs muſt ſubmit: And what is impotent ignorant man, that he ſhould pretend to reſiſt his will? Man the moſt obliged to him and the

moſt dependent upon him of all intelligent beings? It is in vain for us to kick againſt the pricks. One way or other we muſt acknowlege his power and dominion either in our ſalvation or in our deſtruction. "Serve the Lord" therefore "with fear," as the good pſalmiſt ſpeaketh, (Pſalm II. 11, 12.) "rejoice with trembling; Kiſs the Son leſt he be "angry, and ye periſh from the way, when his wrath is kindled but "a little; bleſſed are all they that put their truſt in him."

Another uſe that may be made of this doctrin is to quicken and animate our devotion. For is Chriſt "entred into heaven now to ap-"pear in the preſence of God for us;" (Heb. IX. 24.) and ſhall not we therefore place all our confidence in his prevailing name and merits? ſhall we ever ſo far diſparage his mediatorſhip, as to ſet up other mediators, the Virgin Mary, or Saints or Angels? As the ſon of man he had experience of our wants, as the Son of God he is able to ſupply them. (Heb. IV. 15, 16.) "We have not an high-prieſt which can-"not be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all "points tempted like as we are, yet without ſin: Let us therefore "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, "and find grace to help in time of need."

A third uſe that may be made of this doctrin is to raiſe our hopes and comfort us in our paſſage through this life. For what can be a greater fund of hope and conſolation than the thoughts of Jeſus being exalted in our nature to the right hand of God? What ſublime notions muſt this give us of the dignity of human nature, and how unworthy muſt it be in us to debaſe and demean it? What evil things ſhould we fear, what good things may we not hope and expect, when we have ſo powerful a repreſentative and friend in the court of heaven? What an earneſt is this of our advancement to heaven in due ſeaſon; and what can more effectually abate the edge of affliction, and take away the ſting of death? (Rom. VIII. 33, 34.) "Who ſhall lay any thing to the "charge of God's elect? God that juſtifieth? Who is he that con-"demneth? Chriſt that died, yea rather that is riſen again, who is "even at the right hand of God, who alſo maketh interceſſion for "us?"

A fourth uſe that may be made of this doctrin is to purify and exalt our affections, to wean them from the things of this world, and fix them upon the joys of the next, whither our Saviour is gone before to prepare a place for us. Chriſt our treaſure is above, and ſhall our hearts be here below? Our head is in heaven, and ſhall the members lie groveling on earth? There can be no union with Chriſt and the world together. (Col. III. 1, 2.) "If ye then be riſen with Chriſt, "ſeek thoſe things which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth on the right "hand of God; Set your affection on things above not on things on "the earth."

Finally. As we believe that our Saviour will come *from* heaven, in like manner as he went *into* heaven, let us fit and prepare ourſelves to receive him; let him not catch us ſleeping, or doing worſe than ſleeping; let our loins be girded about, and our lights burning, that ſo (Col. III. 4.) "when Chriſt, who is our life, ſhall appear, we may "alſo appear with him in glory." (Rev. XX. 20.) "Amen, Even "ſo come, Lord Jeſus."

DISSERTATION XXXIV.

On the Uſe of Reaſon in Religion.

IT is common with men to run down things in extremes, or to cry them up in extremes; and of all ſorts of things there has nothing been more extravagantly magnified on one ſide, and more unworthily depreciated on the other than the *uſe of reaſon in religion.* Some men attribute too much, and others too little to reaſon. Some exalt it as the only rule and guide in matters of religion, and others decry it again as no rule or guide at all. The firſt look upon it as their pole-

ſtar, or rather as their ſun, that drowneth every other light of heaven in its ſuperior luſtre: the others regard it no more than an ignis fatuus or wild-fire, a vapor of the earth, which if purſued will lead a man out of the way to a bog or a precipice. The one ſort denies every thing of a myſtery in religion, and will receive nothing for an article of faith that cannot be comprehended as perfectly as a mathematical propoſition: the other ſort eſteems a thing the more myſterious the more orthodox, and the more unreaſonable it is to believe it, the greater merit there is in believing. With thoſe, to ſubmit to proper authority is to follow like beaſts in the herd, and it is altogether as ridiculous and abſurd to admit what is above reaſon as what is againſt reaſon: with theſe, to doubt of one of their articles of religion is no better than hereſy, and an impartial inquiry into the grounds of religion is ſcepticiſm, infidelity, atheiſm, and what not. In a word the former ſet up reaſon in oppoſition to faith, and the latter cry up faith in oppoſition to reaſon.

Now that we may keep the mid way between theſe two extremes neither turning to the right-hand nor to the left; that we may not like theſe worſe than Procruſtes lop reaſon too ſhort, or ſtretch it too far, to make it ſuit our purpoſes; that neither our Chriſtian liberty may run into licentiouſneſs, nor our ſubmiſſion to Church-authority ſink into ſlavery; it is my deſign firſt to juſtify the uſe of reaſon in religion, and then to confine it within its due bounds and limits; to ſhow generally that reaſon is to be uſed in religion, and particularly how it is to be uſed, in what caſes it is proper to exerciſe it, and in what again to exerciſe it would be improper.

I. In the firſt place I am to juſtify the uſe of reaſon in religion; and that may be done upon theſe grounds and principles; becauſe there is no good argument againſt it, and there are ſeveral good arguments for it, and after all, whether we will or not we muſt in ſome meaſure uſe our reaſon in religion, if we are of any religion at all.

There is no good argument *againſt* the uſe of reaſon in religion. For the beſt and moſt ſpecious argument uſually offered is this, that if men are permitted to uſe their reaſon and to judge for themſelves in matters of religion, then farewell peace farewell unity in the Church, floriſh ſchiſm,

ſchiſm, floriſh hereſy, ſo many men ſo many creeds and opinions. And ſuch tragical exclamations are ſome of the main pillars of that proud and monſtrous fabric, the infallibility of the Pope and Church of Rome. But let it be conſidered, that it is not the uſe of reaſon that leadeth a man into hereſy and the like, but the abuſe of it: and to argue (1) from the abuſe of a thing againſt the uſe of it is what the rules of logic will never admit. Men may abuſe their civil liberties, but muſt they therefore be made the ſlaves of arbitrary power? Men may abuſe every thing they have and enjoy, their life and being itſelf, but muſt they therefore have and enjoy nothing, no life or being at all? In like manner muſt they not be ſuffered to uſe their reaſon, leſt they ſhould happen to abuſe it; and for fear of thinking themſelves into hereſy, muſt they be taught not to think at all? The unity of the Church is a deſireable thing, but not to be purchaſed with the loſs of reaſon, the loſs of liberty. It is better for men to differ like men than unite like a drove of beaſts. In ſhort whatever is ſaid againſt reaſon muſt be ſaid either with reaſon or without reaſon: If without reaſon, no body I ſuppoſe will regard it; if with reaſon, it is confirming the very thing which is attempted to be overthrown.

As there is no good argument againſt the uſe of reaſon in religion, ſo there are ſeveral good arguments *for it*. For otherwiſe how ſhall we know whether we are in the right or in the wrong, whether we are in the light and the way to ſalvation, or are walking on in darkneſs and the ſhadow of death? For what end was our reaſon given us but to be uſed? And is it to be uſed in leſſer matters and not in greater; in things temporal and not in ſpiritual; in the periſhing trifles of this world and not in the everlaſting concerns of the world to come? Reaſon is the moſt precious talent we have, and what diſtinguiſheth us chiefly from the brute-creation; and God will puniſh us ſeverely if we bury this talent or any part of it in a napkin. To uſe our reaſon in religion is not only our duty as we are men, but more particularly as we are Chriſtians. For otherwiſe how can we "be ready always to give a reaſon of the hope that is in us," as St.

(1) Ab abuſu ad uſum non valet conſequentia.

Peter

Peter exhorts us; (1 Pet. III. 15.) how can we, as St. Paul commands us, (1 Theſſ. V. 21.) " prove all things and hold faſt that " which is good;" how can we follow the direction of St. John, (1 John IV. 1.) " Beloved, believe not every ſpirit but try the ſpirits " whether they are of God;" and finally how can we anſwer the demand of our bleſſed Saviour (Luke XII. 57.) " Yea, and why even " of yourſelves judge ye not what is right?" Well may the Scripture oblige us to this taſk, for without judgment, without choice, no faith, no religion can be pleaſing and acceptable to God. God hath made us reaſonable creatures, and he will expect from us a (Rom. XII. 1.) " reaſonable ſervice," and not (Eccleſ. V. 1.) the " ſacrifice of fools."

After all, whether we will or not, we muſt in ſome meaſure uſe our reaſon in religion, if we are of any religion at all. For it is plain that we muſt either judge for ourſelves in matters of religion, or leave others to judge for us; but we cannot even leave others to judge for us without judging at the ſame time for ourſelves, and thinking this method more proper for us than the other. Nay the greateſt advocates for implicit faith and blind obedience are forced to allow a partial uſe of reaſon and private judgment: they ſay that we muſt in all things believe and obey the Church, but we muſt firſt judge and determin with ourſelves Which is the Church; and what are all their diſcourſes and writings but ſo many addreſſes and appeals to our reaſon? That is, they would have us hear all the reaſons which can be offered for their religion, but none which can be objected againſt it; and generally men recommend reaſon as long as they think they have reaſon on their ſide, and it is only when reaſon is againſt them that they are againſt reaſon.

We ſee how reaſonable, how neceſſary it is to uſe our reaſon in religion. We cannot wholly extinguiſh the light within us, let us not put it under a buſhel. We muſt exerciſe our reaſon in ſome ſort, let us exerciſe it ſo as not to abuſe it. " Ye are bought with a " price, be not the ſlaves of men," ſaith the apoſtle; (1 Cor. VII. 23.) and which, think we, is worſe the ſlavery of the body or of the mind

mind and conſcience? The Spirit of God in Scripture frequently appeals to the judgment of men. "I ſpeak as to wiſe men, judge ye "what I ſay," ſaith St. Paul (1 Cor. X. 15.) "Yea, and why even "of yourſelves judge ye not what is right?" ſaith our Saviour. "Judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard," ſaith God himſelf in the prophet; (Iſa. V. 3.) and ſhall frail men be ſo preſumptuous as to take away this liberty of judgment, by which the Apoſtle, by which our Saviour, by which God himſelf condeſcends to be tried? In the XVIIth Chapter of Acts the Beræans are highly commended for ſearching the ſcriptures daily to ſee whether thoſe things were ſo or not which were ſaid by the apoſtle who was certainly infallible: and ſhall we be excommunicated and delivered over to Satan as Schiſmatics and Heretics, for ſearching the ſcriptures in like manner to ſee whether thoſe things are ſo or not which are decreed by them whom we certainly know to be not infallible, Popes and Councils, or whoever they be who act like Popes and Councils? Every man is a Pope, who uſurps authority over the faith and conſcience of another?

One cannot obſerve without ſome ſort of pleaſure, that the greateſt enemies to reaſon, are the greateſt enemies too to the Church of England, the Papiſts in one extreme and ſome enthuſiaſtic Sectaries in the other: and uſually (Matt. XV. 14.) "the blind are the lead-"ers of the blind," and ſo they "both fall into the ditch." Others there are indeed, who are not in either of theſe extremes, and yet are apt to be ſtrangely alarmed at a free inquiry into religion, and think that ſuch things ought not to be tolerated in a Chriſtian country: but ſurely they miſtake the ſpirit of the goſpel, and are afraid where no fear is. True religion will always gain by an inquiry; the more it is examined by reaſon, the more reaſonable ſtill it will be found: but if our religion is in any reſpect falſe, why ſhould the falſity be ſcreened and protected, ſince it can never be pleaſing to a God of truth. It looketh as if a man was not well ſatisfied with the goodneſs of his cauſe, who refuſeth to bring it to the bar of reaſon, that it may have a fair and impartial trial. Indeed we muſt "hold "faſt"

" faſt" that which is " good," but we muſt " firſt prove all things." There is no virtue in embracing the truth, unleſs we have tried and know it to be the truth. They who believe they know not why, are in the high way to believe they know not what; and having faith without reaſon is a great ſtep towards having faith againſt reaſon. God be thanked, brethren, (Gal. IV. 31. V. 1.) " we are not the chil-" dren of the bond woman but of the free; ſtand faſt therefore in " the liberty wherewith Chriſt" and under him our Reformers have " made us free, and be not intangled again with the yoke of " bondage."

II. But it may be aſked, if reaſon is to be uſed in religion, is it to be uſed indifferently in all things in religion? and therefore having ſhown generally that reaſon is to be uſed in religion, I proceed in the 2d place to ſhew particularly how it is to be uſed, in what caſes it is proper to exerciſe it, and in what again to exerciſe it would be improper.

Not that it is proper for every one, nor indeed is every one qualified to exerciſe his reaſon in matters of religion. Young and illitterate perſons, and thoſe who are conſtantly engaged in ſervile offices and employments, are by no means competent judges of theſe things, but ſhould contentedly ſubmit to the directions and inſtructions of their parents and maſters. Where reaſon is wanting, authority ſhould ſupply the place; and if children are not " trained " up in the way that they ſhould go," they will go the way that they ſhould not to their own deſtruction; if they are not taught what is good, they will learn of themſelves what is evil. The people in general ſhould have a deference to their clergy, the paſtors and miniſters of their reſpective congregations, who have made theſe things their peculiar ſtudy, and muſt of conſequence underſtand them better. (Mal. II. 7.) " The prieſts lips ſhould keep know-" lege, and they ſhould ſeek the law at his mouth." It is a bad ſign when people forſake their lawful miniſters, and (2 Tim. IV. 3.) " will not endure ſound doctrin, but after their own luſts heap to " themſelves teachers, having itching ears." It is worſe when ignorant

norant tradeſmen and mechanics uſurp the miniſters office, and becauſe they can repeat by rote ſeveral texts of ſcripture, and perhaps quote chapter and verſe, ſet up for teachers and preachers of the goſpel; (1 Tim. I. 7.) "underſtanding neither what they ſay, nor "whereof they affirm." No wicked man can be fair and impartial in his inquiries after truth; his paſſions and his vices are a clog and bias to his underſtanding; he muſt firſt "be willing to do the will "of God," as our Saviour ſaith, (John VII. 17.) and then he "ſhall know of the doctrin." (Dan. XII. 10.) "None of the "wicked ſhall underſtand, but the wiſe ſhall underſtand." Neither is ridicule the exerciſe of reaſon, nor a ſufficient teſt of truth; for falſe wit may render even the beſt of perſons and the beſt of things ridiculous. "A ſcorner," as Solomon ſaith, (Prov. XIV. 6.) "ſeeketh wiſdom, and findeth it not;" he aimeth at wit, and miſſeth the truth. When the uſe of reaſon in religion is recommended, it muſt be ſuppoſed to be recommended only to reaſonable creatures; and to ſuch perſons there are ſome caſes wherein it may be proper to exerciſe our reaſon, and ſome again where it is improper.

Theſe then are the caſes of religion wherein it is *proper* to exerciſe our reaſon. Reaſon muſt prove to us the being of a God and the great duties of natural religion; for (Heb. XI. 6.) "he that "cometh to God muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder "of them that diligently ſeek him;" and theſe are things which divine revelation doth not prove, but always neceſſarily preſuppoſeth and taketh for granted. Theſe are the foundation, and revelation is the ſuperſtructure upon them; and in what can this foundation be laid, but in reaſon? And then ſuppoſing a revelation to come from God, yet reaſon muſt be the judge of what really doth ſo, and what not. Reaſon is the touch-ſtone to diſtinguiſh true revelation from falſe, the genuin ore from baſer metal. And then ſuppoſing it known that ſuch or ſuch a thing is a revelation from God, yet reaſon muſt ſtill judge what is the true ſenſe of that true revelation; and we muſt never receive any interpretation of the word of God that manifeſtly contradicts ſenſe and reaſon. For inſtance Theſe words (Matt. XXVI. 26.) "this

" is my body" are part of divine revelation; but of the true ſenſe and meaning of theſe words reaſon muſt be the judge and interpreter; and there being two interpretations of them, the one litteral and manifeſtly contrary to reaſon, the other figurative and conſiſtent enough with reaſon, we therefore reject the former of theſe interpretations and embrace the latter.

The caſes of religion wherein it is *not proper* to exerciſe our reaſon, are thoſe things which are revealed by God, and yet are above reaſon or not contrary to reaſon. Indeed if a thing is evidently contrary to reaſon, we muſt reject it and we cannot help rejecting it, as not coming from God; for how is it poſſible for us to believe a thing to be true at the ſame time that we know it evidently to be falſe? But if a thing is not againſt reaſon, but only above it (and ſurely there are many things above our finite reaſon and narrow underſtanding) and moreover if it is revealed by God, it is our duty then to ſubmit our reaſon to that revelation, and implicitly to believe what we cannot thoroughly comprehend. For the thing is above reaſon, and therefore we cannot certainly know it to be falſe: but we may certainly know it to be true upon this ground, becauſe it is revealed by God, who is ſo wiſe as not to be deceived, ſo good as not to deceive. To give only one inſtance in the doctrin of the Ever bleſſed Trinity. We are baptized (Matt. XXVIII. 19.) " in the name of the Father, " and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt." We are bleſſed in their name, (2 Cor. XIII. 14.) " The grace of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, " and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghoſt be " with you all. Amen." (1 John V. 7.) " The Father, the Word, and " the Holy Ghoſt, theſe three are one;" if it be not the genuin reading of the text, yet it is the genuin ſenſe of ſeveral texts in ſcripture. The *Father* is ſtiled *God*, the *Son God*, and the *Holy Ghoſt God*; *and yet there is but one God.* This doctrin therefore we are to receive as a moſt certain truth, tho' the particular manner of their exiſtence how they are *three* and how they are *one*, we have neither proper words to expreſs nor adequate ideas to conceive. That thoſe who are three in one reſpect are one in another reſpect, *may* poſſibly

poſſibly be true, and therefore I cannot abſolutely deny it: but that it really *is* true, I have an infallible teſtimony, and therefore—"Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

Another wrong uſe of reaſon in religion and equally pernicious with rejecting things above reaſon is pretending to explain things above reaſon and to define what God has left undefined, and then enforcing theſe explanations and definitions as of equal authority with the word of God. And here it muſt be confeſſed that almoſt all parties have been more or leſs to blame, proteſtants as well as papiſts, orthodox churchmen as well as heretical diſſenters, forſaking the firm ground of reaſon and revelation, and ſoaring above the clouds in vain empty ſpeculations, ſpinning and refining too much, ſuttlelizing their theology by metaphyſical diſtinctions, inquiring and arguing about points which they can never fully comprehend, racking and torturing the ſame texts to ſpeak different ſenſes agreeably to their different ſyſtems, ſeldom or never reſting in the plain meaning and the plain words of ſcripture, but ſearching farther and farther, and after the example of the ſchools, but contrary to the practice of the apoſtles, (1 Cor. II. 13.) ſubſtituting other terms and phraſes, ſuch as "man's wiſdom teacheth," but not ſuch as "the Holy Ghoſt "teacheth." But who art thou, O man, who thus intrudeſt thyſelf into the holy of holies, and pretendeſt to be wiſe above what is written? Canſt thou expreſs the mind of the Holy Ghoſt better than the Holy Ghoſt himſelf? or if it was neceſſary that theſe things ſhould be underſtood more certainly, would they not have been delivered more plainly? Whatever thou may'ſt think, the things of God (the myſterious things of God eſpecially) are beſt expreſſed in the words of God? and in vain doſt thou worſhip God (as it is again and again declared in ſcripture) "teaching for doctrins the commandments of "men." (Deut. XXIX. 29.) The "ſecret things belong unto the "Lord our God, but thoſe things which are revealed belong unto us "and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this "law."

We ſee what is the province of reaſon in religion, and let us not pretend to be wiſe above what is written nor againſt what is written, neither adding any thing to the word of God by our interpretations nor by our interpretations diminiſhing ought from it, for this is the way, (Rom. I. 22.) that " profeſſing ourſelves wiſe we ſhall become fools." Our reaſon never acteth more reaſonably, than when it ſubmits itſelf to infinite reaſon. God gave us this talent at firſt, and we never put it out to better intereſt, than when we repoſit it (as I may ſay) in his hands again. His *ipſe dixit* is proof ſufficient, proof infallible, and and none other's is ſo. Fathers may err, and Councils may be deceived; but as the apoſtle expreſſeth it (Rom. III. 4.) " let God be " true though every man is a lier."

To conclude. God hath joined reaſon and revelation together; and " what God hath joined together, let no man put aſunder." They are both the gifts of God; for (James I. 17.) " every good gift and " every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of " lights:" (John I. 9.) " He is the light which lighteth every man " who cometh into the world," whether by reaſon or revelation or both. They are both I ſay the gifts of God, and differ only in the manner of conveyance. Reaſon is natural revelation, and revelation is ſupernatural reaſon: And ſo far are they from being oppoſits that they do mutual ſervice, and are as it were eyes and feet the one to the other. Revelation cannot ſtand, unleſs ſupported by reaſon; and reaſon can ſee little in religious matters, unleſs inlightened by revelation. It is true there are ſeveral myſteries in our religion, as indeed in what are there not myſteries to human underſtanding? I ſay, it is true there are ſeveral myſteries in our religion, but there are no contradictions. As we are Chriſtians, we muſt believe many things above reaſon; as we are Chriſtians and Proteſtants, we ſhould believe nothing againſt reaſon, nothing without reaſon: And reaſon can never reſt upon any more certain concluſion than this, " God hath ſaid it and therefore it is true." Wherefore (Matt. XXIII. 9, 10.) " call no man your father upon " the earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven; neither be ye " called maſters, for one is your maſter, even Chriſt."

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DISSERTATION XXXV.

On MYSTERIES.

THERE are two ſorts of men, and it is not eaſy to ſay which is guilty of the greater abſurdity and commits the greater violation on ſcripture, they who deny every thing of a myſtery, or they who make a myſtery of every thing in religion. It is certain the truth, in this as in moſt other caſes, lieth in the middle between the two extremes; neither is all plain nor all myſterious; there is a juſt proportion and mixture of light and ſhade; enough plain to direct our practice, enough myſterious to exerciſe our faith. We *know* but we *know in part*, we *propheſy* but we *propheſy in part*, we *ſee* but we *ſee through a glaſs darkly*. Indeed why ſome parts of revelation ſhould be plain and eaſy to be underſtood, every one may immediately ſee the expedience and neceſſity: but for what reaſons may we preſume that other parts are as it were caſt into ſhades and wrapt in clouds and darkneſs? The *reaſonableſs of myſteries* appears not to every one at firſt view: but I hope it may ſatisfy the moſt curious, and ſilence the moſt obſtinate, if we conſider in the firſt place that a thing may be true and we may know it to be true though we cannot fully comprehend it; the myſteriouſneſs of a thing is no objection to the truth of it: if we conſider in the next place that neither was it poſſible nor is it neceſſary that we ſhould perfectly comprehend every thing in religion: if we conſider in the third place that ſeveral reaſons may be aſſigned why ſome things ſhould remain myſteries to us in this world: and laſtly if we conſider that the fuller and more perfect comprehenſion of theſe things will make part of our happineſs in the world to come. (1 Cor. XIII. 9, 10.) Now " we know in part and we propheſy in part; but

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" when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall " be done away."

I. A thing may be true and we may know it to be true, though we cannot fully comprehend it. The myſterioufneſs of a thing is no objection to the truth of it, unleſs we will pretend to ſay that every thing muſt be falſe which we cannot comprehend. But how many things are true and we alſo know to be true, which ſurpaſs and baffle all the wit of man? Philoſophy hath its myſteries as well as religion, and I know not whether there are not more in the former than in the latter. If we look within us, we know there is ſomething that apprehends, that reflects, that wills and chooſes; but what man can fully explain the wonderful union and ſympathy between his ſoul and his body, and how it cometh to paſs that with a thought of the one he can inſtantly move any part of the other? If we look without us, there is not an animal, there is not a vegetable, there is not a piece of matter but is a myſtery to the greateſt philoſopher; and who can give us a clear account how the firſt liveth, how the ſecond groweth, and how the parts of the third adhere together? It is capable of the ſtricteſt demonſtration that matter is not ſelf-exiſtent and therefore muſt have been created; but who can raiſe his imagination ſo high as to conceive how matter was created, how ſomething was produced out of nothing? If there are ſuch myſteries in the material world, how much more in the world of ſpirits? As the Wiſdom of Solomon ſpeaketh, (Wiſd. IX. 16.) " Hardly do we gueſs aright at things that are upon earth, " and with labor do we find the things that are before us; but the " things that are in heaven who hath ſearched out?" That there is a God is demonſtrable by the light of nature; that there are angels or ſpirits is probable from reaſon, is certain from revelation; but who can frame to himſelf any adequate ideas of their ways and manner of exiſtence? Imagination may take her flight in this wide field, but like Noah's dove will find no reſt for the ſole of her foot, and will return wearied and empty from the purſuit.

Since then we admit and muſt admit as true ſo many things which we cannot comprehend, how can we in reaſon make our not comprehend-

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ing of a thing a ground for our rejecting of it as falſe? Certainly many things are, and yet we cannot tell how they are. This we allow in every thing elſe and why not as well in religion? This we admit in the works of God and why not as well in the words of God? God was not obliged to make any revelation at all; and much leſs was He obliged to make all things alike plain and eaſy in a revelation. The Father of lights may communicate light in what meaſure and proportion he pleaſes; and ſurely it better becomes us to be thankful for that light we have, than obſtinately to ſhut our eyes againſt it becauſe it is not greater. In ſhort myſteries are points of doctrin which we cannot comprehend, and conſequently as we cannot know them to be true ſo neither can we know them to be falſe by the doctrins themſelves; but though we cannot know them to be true by themſelves, yet we know them to be true by the truth of this infallible axiom, *Whatever God hath ſaid muſt be true.* For theſe reaſons I apprehend the myſteries of religion can be no objection to the truth of religion.

II. But we may be farther ſatisfied if we conſider in the next place, that neither was it poſſible nor is it neceſſary that we ſhould perfectly comprehend every thing in religion. It is not poſſible becauſe we can have no knowlege farther than we have ideas; and in many things we can have but very imperfect ideas and in ſome none at all. The nature and attributes of God, the ſtate and condition of angels and departed ſouls, the joys of heaven and the pains of hell; theſe and the like one would expect to be the topics of revelation, as they actually are: but how is it poſſible for finite to comprehend infinite? how can fleſh and blood rightly apprehend what is ſpiritual and to be ſpiritually diſcerned? how can we in this world be raiſed and refined enough to have perfect ideas of the world to come? While we are men, we can think only as men, we can underſtand only as men. God in giving us a new revelation doth not alſo give us new capacities. When St. Paul was caught up into the third heaven, neither could he himſelf expreſs nor can we conceive what things he ſaw and heard there: All that he can ſay of them is they were ſuch as it is "not lawful for a man to utter, ſuch as eye hath "not ſeen nor ear heard nor hath it entered into the heart of man to

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" conceive." And when the ſcripture ſpeaketh of theſe things, it neceſſarily ſpeaketh after the manner of men (Rom. VI. 19.) " becauſe of " the infirmities of our fleſh," repreſenting ſpiritual objects under ſenſible corporeal images. Our eyes are too weak, and we can no more bear the light of revelation than the Jews could the brightneſs of Moſes's face *without a veil.*

Such is our ſtate in this world; but then our comfort is that as this knowlege is not poſſible to be attained, ſo neither is it neceſſary to be attained. It would be hard indeed, if any thing neceſſary to ſalvation was not revealed, or if we were obliged to believe more than is revealed; but God is not ſuch a rigid taſk-maſter, he never denies his creatures neceſſaries, he never requires brick without ſtraw; he hath revealed all that is neceſſary to ſalvation, and we are not obliged to believe more than is revealed. It is not neceſſary that we ſhould know the manner of the co-eternal exiſtence of the Son with the Father; it is enough that we believe that (John I. 1.) " in the beginning was the " Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." It is not neceſſary that we ſhould know after what manner the divine and human natures were united in Chriſt, as neither do we know how the ſoul and body are united in any man; it is enough that we believe that as the reaſonable ſoul and fleſh is one man, ſo God and man is one Chriſt. It is not neceſſary that we ſhould know the manner of the proceſſion of the Hóly Ghoſt from the Father and the Son; it is enough that we believe that He proceedeth from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son together is worſhipped and glorified. It is not neceſſary that we ſhould know the particular nature and conſtitution of thoſe bodies with which we ſhall riſe at the reſurrection; it is enough that we believe that we ſhall riſe again, and (1 Cor. XV. 44.) " what " was ſown a *natural* body will be raiſed a *ſpiritual* body." It is not neceſſary that we ſhould know wherein particularly conſiſts the happineſs of the bleſſed or the miſery of the damned; it is enough that we believe that (Matt. XXV. 46.) " the wicked ſhall go away into ever- " laſting puniſhment and the righteous into life eternal." This anſwers all the ends of religion and morality, the other would be the gratification of a needleſs curioſity. In a word, we have not the capacity

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to know all things, but we know enough and more than enough to be ſaved if we will be careful to frame our lives accordingly; and methinks it may content us that (John XIII. 17.) " if we know theſe " things happy are we if we do them."

III. But we will advance a ſtep farther, and argue not only that it is not poſſible nor neceſſary for us to comprehend all myſteries, but alſo that ſeveral reaſons may be aſſigned why ſome things ſhould remain myſteries to us in this world.—May not one reaſon be, as was hinted above, for the exerciſe and trial of our faith; for where would be faith, if all was knowlege, all was demonſtration, all was certainty? May not ſome things be made plain in mercy to ſome and ſome again be made obſcure in judgment to others, that they who ſee not may ſee, and that they who ſee may be made blind? It is certain there is light enough to inlighten the believers, and yet obſcurity enough to try them: And on the other hand there is obſcurity enough to blind the infidels, and yet light enough to leave them without excuſe.—May not another reaſon be to create in us a religious awe and reverence? for ſuch is the nature of man, that familiarity often breedeth contempt and diſtance begets reverence. The heathens had their religious myſteries, from which the profane vulgar were kept at a diſtance, and none were initiated but the beſt and greateſt. There was nothing more reverenced by the Jews in their religion than the ark not to be touched, the holy of holies not to be entred: And the ſun is never more gazed upon and admired than when he labors under an eclipſe.—May not a farther reaſon be to humble the pride of human reaſon and make that the means of life the reverſe of which was the means of death? The remedy is properly the contrary of the diſeaſe. Man fell from happineſs at firſt by pride through a ſenſe of his knowlege; and well is he reſtored to happineſs again by humility through a ſenſe of his ignorance, reverencing thoſe ſacred truths which he cannot comprehend, (2 Cor. X. 5.) " caſting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itſelf " againſt the knowlege of God, and bringing into captivity every " thought to the obedience of Chriſt."—May not ſtill a farther reaſon be to engage our ſtudy and furniſh inexhauſtible matter for it? For men

are apt to neglect what is eaſy to be underſtood, and ſtudy only what is attended with ſome difficulties. Now in ſcripture as there are obvious practical truths to direct our practice, ſo there are abſtruſe ſpeculative truths to engage our ſpeculation. It is in ſcripture as in nature. After all our inquiries there will ſtill be room for farther inquiry; We may draw out of the ocean, but we can never draw it dry. The ableſt divines, the greateſt philoſophers will come at laſt after all their diſcoveries to the concluſion of the ſon of Sirach, (Eccluſ. XLIII. 32.) "There are yet hid greater things than theſe be, for we have ſeen but "a few."—May not ſtill a farther reaſon than all be to beget and nouriſh in us a deſire and longing for that happy ſtate where theſe myſteries may be cleared up, where faith may be loſt in viſion, and doubt may be ſwallowed up in certainty.

For IV. and laſtly the fuller and more perfect comprehenſion of theſe things will make part of our happineſs in the world to come. And ſurely then we can have no more reaſon to complain that we are ignorant of them now, than that earth is not heaven or that men are not angels. As this life is deſigned only for a ſtate of probation, but the next for a ſtate of reward; as we are to ſojourn here only for a time, but there we are to continue for ever: we ſee the reaſon why our knowlege and happineſs ſhould be ſo much greater in the other world than in this. At preſent we are at a vaſt diſtance from thoſe things which are ſuch myſteries to us; but in the next world we ſhall have an intuitive knowlege of them. At preſent we converſe only with men like ourſelves; but in the next world we ſhall be in company with "angels "and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect" we ourſelves alſo being made "perfect." At preſent this "earthy body preſſeth and weigheth down "the mind that muſeth upon many things;" but in the next world "our "bodies" will be like "Chriſt's glorious body," and will be ſo far from clogging and oppreſſing our ſpeculations that they will rather aſſiſt and improve them. At preſent we "walk by faith," as St. Paul ſpeaketh, (2 Cor. V. 7.) but in the next world we ſhall "walk by ſight:" (1 Cor. XIII. 9, &c.) "Now we know in part and we propheſy in part; but when "that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be

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" done away: Now we ſee through a glaſs darkly, but then face to " face: now we know in part, but then ſhall we know even as alſo " we are known:" " Beloved," ſaith St. John, (1 John III. 2.) " now " are we the ſons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall " be; but we know that when he ſhall appear we ſhall be like him, " for we ſhall ſee him as he is."

From what hath been diſcourſed upon this occaſion we will only make a reflection or two. Firſt on the folly of pretending to explain myſteries, 2dly the wiſdom of believing them.

1ſt. The folly of pretending to explain myſteries; for it is fathoming where there is no bottom, it is pretending to explain what is not to be explained, and the folly of ſuch a pretence expoſeth itſelf ſufficiently. The explainers of myſteries in divinity are if poſſible more ridiculous than their brothers in philoſophy, the inventors of the philoſophers ſtone, the ſquarers of the circle, and the diſcoverers of the longitude. Poor buſy vain men, who take a great deal of pains, and promiſe great things, but all to no purpoſe! For how can they ever be ſatisfied that they are in the right in their explication of a myſtery? It is infinity to unity that they are in the wrong; for the truth can be but one but errors are without number and without end. And by the ſame reaſon that one man offers one explication, another will offer another; and every man and every Church being fond of their own are willing to impoſe it upon others: And ſo creeds are increaſed and articles are multiplied; and becauſe creeds and articles abound the love of many waxeth cold: And ſome not rightly diſtinguiſhing between the doctrin and the explication, between the doctrin of God and the explication of men, reject the former on account of the latter. The compilers of creeds and articles, of ſyſtems and bodies of divinity may think what they pleaſe, (Col. II. 18.) " intruding into thoſe things which they have not ſeen vainly puft up " by their fleſhly minds:" but certainly there are no words to expreſs the myſteries of religion like the words of the Holy Ghoſt. And this is what the Church of England hath prudently as well as piouſly obſerved, expreſſing herſelf generally in the words of ſcripture, or in ſuch terms as are agreeable to it, or deducible from it.

2dly. The wiſdom of believing myſteries; for it is complying we ſee with the fitneſs and neceſſity of things, it is ſubmitting human reaſon to infinite reaſon, and can any thing be more reaſonable than ſuch a ſubmiſſion? Is it rational in caſes of phyſic which we do not underſtand, to take the advice of ſkilful phyſicians; is it rational in points of law which we do not underſtand, to abide by the opinion of able lawyers; is it rational to admit any demonſtration in the mathematics which we do not underſtand upon the authority of the greateſt mathematicians; and is it not much more rational in things of divinity which we do not underſtand, in things ſpiritual, in things heavenly, to reſign up our faith to him who is of infinite wiſdom and therefore cannot be deceived, of infinite goodneſs and therefore cannot deceive. They who reject myſteries muſt yet admit other things more incredible more unaccountable: for it will ever be found true that the greateſt infidels are the moſt credulous perſons in the world. With all their boaſted liberty they are the loweſt and moſt abject of ſlaves; with all their boaſted reaſon there are more myſteries and abſurdities too in the creed of a free-thinker than in the creed of the moſt bigotted Papiſt. What was ſaid of the freethinkers and free livers of former times is equally applicable to thoſe of the preſent, (Rom. I. 22.) "Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe they become "fools;" whereas to profeſs ourſelves fools in compariſon with God is the way to become truly wiſe. Such is the advice of the wiſeſt of men, to put our truſt and confidence in God, and not to rely on our own underſtandings; and with his advice I will conclude, and let the wiſe attend to the wiſeſt; (Prov. III. 5, &c.) "Truſt in the Lord "with all thine heart, and lean not to thine own underſtanding; "In all thy ways acknowlege him and he ſhall direct thy paths; "Be not wiſe in thine own eyes, fear the Lord and depart from "evil."

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DISSERTATION XXXVI.

On the long Life of St. JOHN.

OUR bleſſed Saviour had ſignified to St. Peter by what death he ſhould glorify God. (John XXI. 18, 19.) " Verily verily I ſay " unto thee, When thou waſt young, thou girdedſt thyſelf, and " walkedſt whither thou wouldeſt; but when thou ſhalt be old, thou " ſhalt ſtretch forth thy hands, and another ſhall gird thee, and " carry thee whither thou wouldeſt not. This ſpake he, ſignifying " by what death he ſhould glorify God. And when he had ſpoken " this, he ſaith unto him, Follow me." It is here ſufficiently intimated, that St. Peter ſhould live to a good old age, but at length ſhould come to a violent end; and the expreſſions of his " ſtretch- " ing forth his hands," and being " girded by another," and " fol- " lowing Chriſt," ſeem to foretel what kind of martyrdom he ſhould ſuffer, and that he ſhould reſemble Chriſt in the manner of his death as well as in his life. Accordingly it is related by eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians, that he was crucified at Rome in the perſecutions under Nero between 30 and 40 years after the death of Chriſt; and at his own deſire was crucified with his head downwards, that ſome difference might be made between him and his Lord and Maſter.

St. Peter having heard his own fate, was curious alſo to know that of the other apoſtle St. John, that diſciple for whom Jeſus always manifeſted an eſpecial regard; (ver. 20, 21.) " Then Peter " turning about ſeeth the diſciple whom Jeſus loved following, " which alſo leaned on his breaſt at ſupper, and ſaid Lord Which is " he that betrayeth thee? Peter ſeeing him ſaith to Jeſus, Lord and " what ſhall this man do?" To which our Saviour returns this anſwer, (ver. 22.) " If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to

" thee?

" thee? Follow thou me." There are two comings of Chriſt particularly mentioned in the goſpels and epiſtles as ſtill future, his coming to take vengeance upon the Jews, and his coming to judge the world: but this text cannot poſſibly be underſtood of his latter coming, and therefore it neceſſarily muſt of the former. It cannot be underſtood of the latter, becauſe then St. John would never have died, and at the general reſurrection would be " caught up alive in the " clouds to meet the Lord in the air;" but this opinion he himſelf confutes in the verſe immediately following (ver. 23.) " Then went " this ſaying abroad among the brethren, that that diſciple ſhould " not die, yet Jeſus ſaid not unto him He ſhall not die, but If I will " that he tarry till I come, what is that to Thee?" And therefore, ſince it cannot poſſibly be underſtood of his laſt coming to judge the world, it neceſſarily muſt be underſtood of his former coming to take vengeance upon the Jews. So that our Saviour's meaning may be more fully expreſſed after this manner: " If I will that he tarry " till I come," If I will that he live till the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, " What is that to thee? follow thou me;" Repreſs thy vain curioſity and do thy duty, take up thy croſs and follow me.

This I conceive to be the natural and obvious ſenſe of the words, and to common apprehenſion, though they may not be a direct prophecy, yet they are a ſtrong intimation, that St. John ſhould live till the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, and the diſſolution of the Jewiſh œconomy: and they were accordingly verified in the event. " There are ſome " ſtanding here," ſaid our Saviour to his diſciples, (Matt. XVI. 28.) " who ſhall not taſte of death, till they ſee the Son of man coming in " his kingdom:" but it was hard to imagin that a perſon of ſuch eminence as St. John ſhould be one of the number; and conſidering the malice and bigottry of the Jews on one ſide and the fury and perſecutions of the Heathens on the other, it muſt be a ſignal act of providence to preſerve the apoſtle in the midſt of ſo many dangers, and could be effected only by him who hath the iſſues of life and death in his power. Nay St. John not only lived till the deſtruction of

(1) Tertull. de præſcrip. Hæret. c. 36. p. 215. Edit. Rigaltii. Paris 1675.

Jeruſa-

Jeruſalem, but ſurvived it many years during the reigns of the Roman Emperors, Veſpaſian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva, and is commonly ſuppoſed to have died in the ſecond or third year of Trajan of extreme old age. It was ſomewhat wonderful, that he did not fall a ſacrifice in the perſecutions under Nero, as well as St. Peter and St. Paul: but his deliverance from Domitian is ſtill more ſurpriſing. (1) Tertullian, a writer of good credit in the beginning of the third century, and one very well verſed in the Roman affairs, informs us, that St. John was ſent to Rome by order of Domitian, and was there put into a caldron of oil ſet on fire; but the rage of Domitian was fruſtrated like that of Nebuchadnezzar, and the ſame good providence, which delivered the three young men out of the fiery furnace, preſerved St. John from the caldron of burning oil. Indeed the truth of this ſtory hath been called in queſtion; and it were to be wiſhed that it had more vouchers if it be true, and if it be falſe, it is to be lamented that it hath any vouchers at all, and eſpecially a man of ſo great authority, whom (2) Euſebius affirms to be perfectly well ſkilled in the Roman laws, and moſt famous in other reſpects as a writer. All that we know with any degree of certainty is, that St. John was baniſhed into Patmos, an iland in the Archipelago, where he was favored with thoſe heavenly viſions, and wrote his Apocalyps or Revelation: but for reaſons which have been aſſigned in the Analyſis of the Revelation we ſuppoſe this was done in Nero's time rather than in Domitian's: and when he was advanced in years, he fixed his abode chiefly at Epheſus, and there lived and died in peace, as is generally believed being near a hundred years old, but as ſome ſay much older.

Thus much may ſuffice to illuſtrate this paſſage of ſcripture and the prophecy contained in it. Give me leave now to make an obſervation or two from what hath been ſaid upon it.

1. I obſerve from hence the ſingular providence of God in thus preſerving and extending the life of this apoſtle beyond the uſual period of the life of man. Several apoſtolical men, as Simeon Biſhop of Jeruſalem, Ignatius Biſhop of Antioch, and Polycarp Biſhop of Smyrna,

(2) Euſeb. Eccleſ. Hiſt. Lib. 2. Cap. 2. Edit. Valeſii.

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are obſerved to have lived to a very great age; and they might poſſibly have ſpun out the thred of life ſomewhat longer, had they not been violently cut off by martyrdom. The long life of theſe primitive men might in ſome meaſure be owing to their ſober and temperate way of living; but no doubt it is to be aſcribed principally to the gracious interpoſition of Almighty God, and was wiſely contrived for the common good and benefit of Chriſtianity—that the Churches might be ſettled under their auſpicious care and direction—that any innovations or alterations in the faith might be prevented or remedied—and that the traditions of the apoſtles might be better preſerved and delivered down from age to age. If the hand of providence be ſo viſible in prolonging the lives of theſe apoſtolical men, how much more conſpicuous is it in prolonging the life of an apoſtle himſelf? And of all the apoſtles this favor might be conferred upon St. John particularly, becauſe he was our Lord's particular favorite. He and his brother James and Peter made up the triumvirate, that our Lord admitted into his privacies and honored with his more immediate friendſhip. Nay even of theſe St. John ſeemeth to have been the greateſt confident, and to have had the firſt place in our Lord's eſteem and affection. He is emphatically called the diſciple "whom Jeſus loved:" He was the man who ſat next him at ſupper and reclined upon his breaſt: He was the man to whom St. Peter beckoned to aſk our Lord Who would betray him: finally He was the man, to whom our Saviour, almoſt with his laſt breath, bequeathed the care of his mother. So particular an affection had our Lord for St. John, hereby authorizing private friendſhip, and ſhowing that it is no ways inconſiſtent with univerſal charity and love of the public. Now this ſeemeth to have been the reaſon of our Lord's particular affection for St. John. There was ſome reſemblance and ſimilitude in their temper and manners, and the original excellencies of the Maſter were not ill copied and tranſcribed by the diſciple. His temper, I conceive, was naturally warm and ambitious, as we may infer from his deſiring our Saviour to command fire from heaven upon the Samaritans, and from his joining with his brother in a petition to our Lord, that they might ſit the one on his right hand and the other

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on his left in his kingdom: But religion ſeemeth to have got the better of nature, and to have changed his natural heat only into the more fervent zeal and charity. Indeed of all the apoſtles St. John ſeemeth to have come neareſt to our Lord's character, and to have reſembled him moſt in tenderneſs and ſweetneſs of diſpoſition. His writings breathe nothing but univerſal kindneſs and charity: this is the ſpirit that runneth through and animates them all: this was viſible in every part of his behaviour and is ſtill legible in every part of his writings. In all his diſcourſes his main topic was the love that God bore to men and that men ought therefore to bear one to another: And when he was grown old, and age and natural infirmities had rendered him incapable of making long harangues, he was (3) wont to addreſs himſelf to the Chriſtian aſſemblies only in theſe words, "My dear "children let us love one another:" and being aſked why he repeated the ſame thing ſo often, he made anſwer This is the command I received of the Lord Jeſus, and if we do this we need do nothing elſe. Such was the divine temper of this bleſſed apoſtle, and might in an eſpecial manner recommend him to the favor and affection of a maſter who was love itſelf. Even in the natural way the greateſt preſervative of health is a ſerene even temper: no regimen for long life like generoſity and good nature; they are wonderful nouriſhers of the ſpirits and nouriſhed by them again: whereas ill nature and envy and all the paſſions of the harſher kind ſtrangely prey upon the vitals, and are the worſt ſort of conſumption. (Matt. V. 5.) "Bleſſed are the meek for they ſhall inherit the earth," was one of our Saviour's beatitudes, and as we have ſeen was remarkably verified in the caſe of St. John.

But the life of this apoſtle was prolonged not ſo much for his own ſake, as for the ſake of the Church; and the bleſſing was not confined to himſelf, but extended to the whole body of Chriſtians. Several of the primitive writers ſpeak of St. John as an excellent Church-governor, as one indefatigable in making new converts to Chriſtianity, and confirming thoſe already made: and his concern

(3) Hieron. Comm. ad Galat. Cap. 6. Tom. 4. p. 314. Edict. Benedict.

for the Churches of Aſia in particular, all of his own planting or at leaſt cultivating, is ſtill to be ſeen in his ſeven epiſtles addreſſed to the ſeven angels or governors. He was a living oracle to all his contemporaries, a ſtandard to which all might appeal, a criterion by which all might be tried: and of what weight and authority in controverted points muſt be the judgment and deciſion of a man who had perſonally converſed with our Saviour, and not only perſonally converſed with him but was an apoſtle, and not only was an apoſtle but the favorite apoſtle and the diſciple whom "Jeſus loved?" Certainly ſuch a man was a public bleſſing to the firſt century: and he was not only of ſervice to the church while he was living, but "be-"ing dead he ſtill ſpeaketh." His writings are a fund and treaſure houſe of all divinity: and to his long life we are indebted for theſe invaluable remains, being moſt of them written by him in his old age. His ſtile itſelf, in his goſpel and in his epiſtles, ſavors ſomething of the primitive old man: there is the *lene et temperatum dicendi genus* the gentle and temperate way of ſpeaking, the mildneſs and maturity that is in a manner proper and peculiar to old age. Eccleſiaſtical hiſtorians (4) aſſure us, that St. John peruſed the three other goſpels and confirmed them with his approbation; and then, at the requeſt of the Biſhops of Aſia, compoſed his own goſpel, partly to record ſome tranſactions which were omitted by the other evangeliſts, and partly as an antidote to ſome hereſies which were then ſpringing up in the Church. His firſt epiſtle was anciently inſcribed to the Parthians, and therefore he is reaſonably ſuppoſed to have preached the goſpel as far as Parthia; and according to his uſual modeſty he conceals his name in all his epiſtles, and ſtileth himſelf only "the Elder," probably in alluſion to his great age. His Apocalyps or book of the Revelation was written by him during his confinement in the iland Patmos, and is the firſt in time, though laſt in order of all his writings. Indeed this prophecy, like moſt other prophecies, hath ſomething in it very obſcure; but what is perplexed and difficult now may be cleared up and made eaſy hereafter, when the particulars ſhall be accompliſhed

(4) Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. Lib. 3. Cap. 24.

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and men have the events before their eyes to compare with the predictions; and in the mean time though many things are very hard to be underſtood, yet many again are very plain, and doubtleſs (Rev. I. 3.) "bleſſed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this pro-"phecy, and keep thoſe things which are written therein." It is needleſs to recommend the books of St. John to thoſe Chriſtians, who daily peruſe them with delight and improvement. Only let it be obſerved that the ancients compared him to an *eagle* for the ſublime myſteries he treateth, and gave him by way of eminence above all the other apoſtles the name of the *Divine*. Even Heathen philoſophers have expreſſed their admiration of his works, and what then muſt be the opinion and ſentiments of us Chriſtians? It is well remarked by (5) one, that Peter was an apoſtle but properly no evangeliſt; Mark an evangeliſt but no apoſtle; St. Matthew an apoſtle and evangeliſt but no prophet; but St. John was an apoſtle, an evangeliſt, and a prophet. We ſee of what uſe and importance was the long life of St. John, and particularly had it not been for that we ſhould in all probability never have enjoyed his divine writings. St. John was a bleſſing to the Church not only in himſelf but likewiſe in his diſciples and ſcholars, ſuch as Ignatius, Polycarp, and others, all of them men famous and uſeful in their generation: And the longer he lived, the more proſelytes he might gain, the more ſcholars inſtruct, found the more Churches, conſtitute the more Biſhops, obviate the more hereſies, and fulfilling the greater work of the miniſtry here obtain the larger ſhare of bliſs and glory hereafter.

2. I obſerve that we may from hence deduce a very good argument againſt the Pope's ſupremacy. Several ways there are of overthrowing this reverend tyranny, this ſpiritual uſurpation, as you may ſee particularly in Dr. Barrow's moſt learned treatiſe upon this ſubject: but here we are furniſhed with an argument drawn from eccleſiaſtical ſtory and plain matter of fact. If the doctrin of the Romaniſts in this point be true, then, after the death of St. Peter, Linus or Clemens or whoever he was that ſucceeded him, became ſupreme head and governor of the

(5) Dr. Cave.

Church: but we have ſhown before, and it is agreed on all hands, that St. John ſurvived St. Peter many years; and was it not then very ſtrange that another ſhould be conſtituted head of the Church in excluſion of an apoſtle himſelf? What? was Linus ſuperior to St. John, and muſt the apoſtle ſubmit to the juriſdiction of one who was no apoſtle? Suppoſing St. Peter had the ſupremacy and that ſupremacy deſcended, how came it to deſcend to a private perſon rather than to a brother apoſtle and the apoſtle too "whom Jeſus loved?" Certainly while St. John was living, the Biſhop of Rome could not be head of the Church; and I would fain know how he came by that right and title, after St. John was dead? The farther one purſues this argument the more it appears, that the papal ſupremacy is a monſtrous impoſition upon latter ages. Much may be ſaid in oppoſition to it from ſcripture and from reaſon, and here too we have produced againſt it hiſtorical evidence and undeniable matter of fact.

Laſtly I obſerve from hence that we ſhould not be too curious and inquiſitive into abſtruſe matters, but rather take care to do our duty in thoſe plainer inſtances which are commanded. When any curious queſtion was propoſed to our Saviour, he never returned a direct anſwer, but always took occaſion from thence to raiſe ſome moral inſtruction. Thus when one inquired of him concerning the number of thoſe who ſhall be ſaved, (Luke XIII. 23.) "Lord are there few that be "ſaved?" he did not ſatisfy him how many would be ſaved, but bade all his hearers take care to be of the number, be it more or be it leſs: "Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate, for many I ſay unto you will ſeek "to enter in and ſhall not be able." In like manner when his diſciples aſked him, (Matt. XVIII. 1.) "Who is the greateſt in the kingdom of "heaven?" inſtead of naming the perſon as they expected, he called a little child unto him and ſet him in the midſt of them and ſaid, "Verily I ſay unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little "children ye ſhall not enter into the kingdom of heaven: Whoſoever "therefore ſhall humble himſelf as this little child, the ſame is greateſt "in the kingdom of heaven." In the particular inſtance now under conſideration, our bleſſed Saviour, we ſee, would not gratify the needleſs

leſs curioſity of one of the chiefeſt apoſtles, but bade him leave the event of things to providence, and " follow him:" And what he ſaid to St. Peter, he ſaith to every man in all caſes of the like nature, " What is " that to thee? follow thou me." Whatever God has concealed, whatever he has commanded, there are without doubt infinitely the wiſeſt reaſons both for the one and the other; and we can never be too incurious concerning the former, nor too diligent to fulfil and execute the latter. This prying inquiſitive temper, like a craving appetite, is uneaſy and painful to itſelf: but the road of duty is plain and eaſy; to know it is wiſdom, to purſue it is happineſs; (John XIII. 17.) " If " ye know theſe things, happy are ye if ye do them." Curioſity not only giveth conſtant pain, but meeteth alſo with perpetual diſappointment; it would comprehend all myſteries, explain all revelations, and ſo is ever ſeeking and yet never ſatisfied, " ever learning and yet never able " to come to the knowlege of the truth:" but the doing of our duty cannot fail of attaining its end; it is the true ſpring and ſource of ſelf-ſatisfaction; (Prov. XIV. 14.) " a good man ſhall be ſatisfied from himſelf;" and goodneſs (1 Tim. IV. 8.) " hath the promiſe of the life that now is, " and of that which is to come." Beſides the love of novelty betrays a man into a thouſand inconveniences and dangers; for how many vain projectors have ſtarved? how many pretending to be wiſe above what is written, have proved downright heretics at laſt? " They ſpent their " time in nothing elſe but either to tell or to hear ſome new thing" (Acts XVII. 21.) was the character of the Athenians, and few of them we find had the grace to embrace the goſpel. The curious man ſearcheth into things above his ſphere, and ſo profeſſing himſelf wiſe becomes a fool: but every man hath it in his power, if he hath it but in his inclination, to be good, and to be good is to be truly wiſe, " wiſe unto " ſalvation." This curioſity was forbidden, and proved fatal to our firſt parents; for eating of the tree of knowlege they forfeited their title to immortality or the tree of life.

To conclude. If a man would every now and then aſk himſelf this queſtion, This that I am doing, this that I am thinking, is it my duty, is it my buſineſs, what good will it do to men, or what glory will redound

dound from it to God? I ſay if a man would lay his hand on his heart and ſeriouſly aſk himſelf this queſtion, it would prevent a great deal of vanity and folly in the world. All other things are impertinence compared with our duty: this in the firſt place we muſt take care to diſcharge, ever remembring our Saviour's reproof of the inquiſitive diſciple "What is that to thee? follow thou me." (Deut. XXIX. 29.) "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but thoſe things which "are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may "do all the words of the law."

DISSERTATION XXXVII.

On St. PAUL's Eloquence.

IT was the good pleaſure of Almighty God in the preaching and propagation of the goſpel, to make uſe of ſuch inſtruments as were by no means naturally fitted for it, men of low parentage and education, of low employments and occupations, of no learning or eloquence, of no power or authority, of no repute or influence in the world. He "hid theſe things from the wiſe and prudent, and revealed them unto "babes," that "no fleſh might glory in his preſence," that the work might the more evidently appear to be his own, and his own be therefore all the glory. But yet that human learning might not ſeem to be totally reprobated and rejected from having any ſhare in the goſpel, that ſcience and true religion might not be thought any ways inconſiſtent, but capable each of promoting and improving and adorning the other, St. Paul was added to the number of the twelve apoſtles, (Galat. I. 1.) "an apoſtle not of men, neither by man, but by Jeſus Chriſt and God "the Father, who raiſed him from the dead." He was alſo deſigned

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to be the great preacher and apoſtle to the Gentiles, which made it the more requiſite for him to know ſomething of men and manners, to be maſter of ſome erudition and learning, to be converſant with the beſt Greek authors, and well acquainted with the theology and philoſophy of the heathen nations, as he plainly appears to have been in ſeveral parts of his diſcourſes and writings.

Now it may be truly affirmed of St. Paul, that he was not improperly choſen for theſe great purpoſes. For he was of honorable deſcent, (Phil. III. 5.) being " of the ſtock of Iſrael, of the tribe of Benjamin, " an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law a Phariſee." He was a native of Tarſus (Acts XXI. 39.) " a city of Cilicia, a citizen " of no mean city." He was beſides a citizen of Rome, as ſome conceive, by virtue of his birth at Tarſus, or as others ſuppoſe, by privilege derived from his parents; and as Saul was his Hebrew, ſo Paul was his Roman name, (Acts XIII. 9.) " Saul who alſo is called Paul." At Tarſus, as we learn from (1) Strabo, there were at that time famous ſchools of litterature ſuperior even to thoſe of Athens and Alexandria; ſo that he might have the advantages of a liberal education from his early youth, and without doubt he then firſt contracted his taſte and reliſh for the Greek poets, of whom in his advanced years he ſtill retained ſo much as to make quotations from them. At the ſame time, as it was the cuſtom among the Jews for every one of whatever rank or condition he might be, to learn ſome manual trade or operation, he was trained up to the buſineſs and occupation of a tent-maker, a profitable buſineſs in countries where they lived ſo much in tents whether in peace or in war. From Tarſus he went to Jeruſalem to complete his education, and to be farther inſtructed in the knowlege of the law; and there he ſtudied under the learned Gamaliel, one of the moſt famous of the Jewiſh doctors, and a member of the great council, who made that wiſe and moderate ſpeech, which is recorded in the Vth chapter of the Acts of the Apoſtles; " and to him they agreed." St. Paul is ſaid (Acts XXII. 3.) to have been " brought up at the feet of " Gamaliel;" for it was the manner in the Jewiſh academies for the

(1) Strab. Lib. 14. p. 991. Edit. Amſtel. 1707.

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maſter to ſit above, and for the ſcholars or auditors to ſtand around beneath. Under ſuch a maſter he made uncommon proficiency, and as he ſaid himſelf (Gal. I. 14.) " profited in the Jews religion above " many his equals in his own nation." Beſides his natural abilities and acquired learning, if our Saviour's promiſe (Luke XXI. 15.) " I will " give you a mouth and wiſdom which all your adverſaries ſhall not be " able to gainſay nor reſiſt" was ever fulfilled in any of his diſciples, it was certainly to the fulleſt extent in St. Paul. He was called in an extraordinary manner to be an apoſtle, and we may ſuppoſe therefore would be bleſſed with extraordinary indowments: and it happens very providentially, that we have more of his writings remaining, and know more of his acts and diſcourſes, than of any other of the apoſtles, St. Luke having been his companion and fellow-traveler, who was bred a phyſician, and was himſelf alſo a man of good learning and abilities.

The talent of ſpeaking is one thing, and that of writing is another; and we have known ſeveral perſons eminent in the one, and yet ſtrangely deficient in the other: but this apoſtle was excellent in both; and whether we conſider him as an orator or an author, we ſhall find few or none to equal or exceed him. The effects of his eloquence which are upon record are really ſurpriſing; and yet his perſon by all accounts of it was no recommendation or ornament to his oratory; for it is ſaid of him (2 Cor. X. 10.) that " his bo- " dily preſence was weak and his ſpeech contemptible." His infirmity, whatever it was, he himſelf calleth (2 Cor. XII. 7.) " a " thorn in the fleſh," which according to ancient tradition was a violent headach or ſome bodily diſeaſe, which was a diſadvantage both to his appearance and to his delivery, and might hinder his ſucceſs in preaching the goſpel. A very indifferent diſcourſe may affect us ſet off with a handſome perſon and graceful elocution; but where theſe requiſites are wanting, and we are ſtill affected, the diſcourſe muſt be admirable indeed: the one is only the ſpeaker's happineſs, the other is his merit and excellence. It was then more St. Paul's matter than manner that made ſuch impreſſion, and had ſuch ſurpriſing effects: and certainly there is no where finer inſinuation and addreſs,

addreſs, no where greater compaſs of thought and force of reaſoning, no where a ſtronger torrent of words, more exuberance of matter and more variety of ſtile, than in all his ſpeeches and writings.

It was in the road near to Damaſcus that he was called in that wonderful manner to the apoſtleſhip, and the firſt fruits of his converſion were almoſt as miraculous as his converſion itſelf. (Acts IX. 19—22.) For within a few days he preached Chriſt in the ſynagogues at Damaſcus to the ſurpriſe and aſtoniſhment of all who heard him, that he who ſo cruelly perſecuted the Church, and came thither from Jeruſalem for that very purpoſe, ſhould of a ſudden become ſo brave a champion for the Chriſtian religion. " But Saul " increaſed the more in ſtrength, and confounded the Jews which " dwelt at Damaſcus, proving that this is very Chriſt."

Paul and Barnabas having been ſeperated for the great work of preaching the goſpel to the Gentiles, beſides other places came to Lyſtra, a city of Lycaonia in the leſſer Aſia. (Acts XIV. 6—22.) Now the Lycaonians were groſs idolaters, and little better than barbarians, as the Greek (2) geographers Ephorus and Strabo repreſent moſt of the inland nations of the leſſer Aſia to be. Such perſons are apt to be ſtruck and affected more with ſigns and wonders than with reaſons and arguments; and Paul therefore at his firſt preaching among them very ſeaſonably and fitly confirms his doctrin by a ſignal miracle. For ſeeing " a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb," very attentive to him, convinced by his diſcourſe, and ready to embrace and profeſs the faith, he " ſaid " with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet:" and no ſooner was the word ſpoken than the man with ſudden energy " leaped and " walked." At the ſight of this miracle " the people lifted up " their voices," but not within hearing of the apoſtles, ſaying in the language of the Lycaonians, " The gods are come down to us " in the likeneſs of men." They believed all the fabulous ſtories in the poets of the gods deſcending upon earth in human forms, and converſing with men: and they took " Barnabas" for " Jupiter,"

(2) Strab. Lib. 14. p. 996. Edit. Amſtel. 1707.

being the elder and probably the more auguſt and venerable perſonage, and " Paul" for " Mercury" the god of eloquence, " becauſe " he was the chief ſpeaker. Then the prieſt of Jupiter, which was " before their city," his temple being without the city, " brought " oxen and garlands," oxen crowned with garlands, " and would have " done ſacrifice with the people." As ſoon as the apoſtles were aware of their intention, " they rent their cloaths and ran in among them " crying out, Sirs, why do ye theſe things? we alſo are men of like " paſſions with you," we are ſubject to the ſame diſeaſes and infirmities as you are, and the purport of our preaching is to turn you from " theſe vanities," from the worſhip of vain idols to ſerve the living and true God. Their diſcourſe is admirably adapted to their auditors; they derive their arguments from no higher ſource than natural religion, and inſiſt only upon the plain and obvious topics of *creation* and *providence*. The works of creation are a demonſtration of the being of God, " the living God who made heaven and earth " and the ſea, and all things that are therein. In times paſt he " ſuffered all nations," all the heathens, " to walk in their own " ways," without any particular revelation of himſelf as to the people of Iſrael. But yet his general providence afforded ample proofs of his power and goodneſs: " Nevertheleſs he left not him- " ſelf without witneſs, in that he did good, and gave us rain from " heaven and fruitful ſeaſons, filling our hearts with food and glad- " neſs." Theſe arguments are as forcible as they are plain and obvious to the meaneſt capacity; He is the creator and preſerver of us and all things, he is the author and giver of all the good that we enjoy, and he therefore is the only proper and adequate object of our worſhip. The people were ſo tranſported, that " with theſe " ſayings ſcarce reſtrained they them that they had not done ſacri- " fice unto them." But ſuch is the fickleneſs and uncertainty of the multitude, that him whom they were now for worſhipping as a god, ſoon after at the inſtigation of certain Jews, they ſuffered to be " ſtoned, and drawn out of the city, ſuppoſing he had been " dead." Howbeit the apoſtles had ſown ſome good ſeeds among them,

them, for we read that within a little time they " returned again " to Lyſtra, confirming the ſouls of the diſciples, and exhorting " them to continue in the faith."

Our apoſtle's conduct and behaviour among the learned and polite Athenians (Acts XVII. 16—34.) we ſhall find to be ſomewhat different from what it was to the rude and illitterate Lycaonians, but both of equal fitneſs and propriety. He did not open his commiſſion at Athens in the ſame manner as at Lyſtra, by working a miracle. There were without doubt ſeveral cripples at Athens, for ſuch caſes abounded in that climate, as Dr. Bentley, who hath admirably well expounded this whole diſcourſe of the apoſtle in the introduction to one of his Boyle's lectures, remarks from Lucretius, who learned it probably from his maſter Epicurus, a native of Athens,

" Atthide tentantur greſſus, oculique in Achæis
" Finibus," Lib. 6:

but it doth not appear that any of them had the good diſpoſition of the cripple at Lyſtra, or " faith to be healed." And beſides the Greeks did not ſo much " require a ſign," (1 Cor. I. 22.) as " ſeek " after wiſdom." Accordingly we find the apoſtle " diſputing" not only " in the ſynagogue with the Jews and with" the Jewiſh proſelytes " the devout perſons," but likewiſe in the forum " in " the market daily with them that met with him." Some of the philoſophers alſo, particularly " of the Epicureans and of the Sto- " ics, encountered him," ſome treating him as a " babler" or idle prating fellow, others looking upon him as a " ſetter forth" ξενων δαιμονιων " of ſtrange gods." Part of the accuſation againſt Socrates was of the ſame nature, that he brought in καινα δαιμονια *new gods:* and how doth he refute the charge? He denies it, and declares in the moſt ſolemn manner before his judges, that he worſhipped only the gods of his country, and in the ſame manner upon the ſame altars and with the ſame ſacrifices as his country worſhipped them. We ſhall ſee preſently, how much more heroically and more philoſophi-

cally St. Paul acquitted himſelf upon the like occaſion, and what an abler champion of the truth and better teacher of righteouſneſs he was than the brighteſt luminary of the heathen world. "He ſeem-"ed to be a ſetter-forth of ſtrange gods, becauſe he preached unto "them Jeſus and the reſurrection." But why *ſtrange gods* in the plural number? They could not, as ſome have imagined, have taken *the reſurrection* for *a goddeſs*, becauſe the word was in common uſe among them, and they had ſome idea of the thing, of a man after death coming to life again. He preached *only Jeſus* and the reſurrection in conſequence of him: but ſuch a change of number is familiar in all authors and in all languages; as St. Matthew and St. Mark ſaid that *the thieves* who were crucified with Jeſus reviled him, when it is certain from St. Luke that only *one* of them did ſo. We have another inſtance alſo juſt below, "as certain "of your own poets have ſaid," when only *one* poet, Aratus, is expreſly quoted. All together they bring the apoſtle unto "Mars-hill" or "Areopagus," the place of judicature and of the greateſt reſort in all the city, and with the curioſity natural to the Athenians requeſt him to give an account of his new doctrin. What a glorious ſcene was here for the manifeſtation of the truth before ſuch a promiſcuous and numerous aſſembly of citizens and ſtrangers, of philoſophers of all ſects, and people of all conditions: And with what exquiſite ſkill and contrivance is every part and member of his diſcourſe ſo framed and accommodated, as to obviate ſome principal error and prejudice in ſome party or other of his hearers! Moſt of the falſe notions both of their vulgar and philoſophical religion are here expoſed and refuted. If there was nothing elſe remaining, yet this ſufficiently teſtifies how great a maſter he was in the learning of the Greeks. Moſt of the fundamental truths both of natural and revealed religion are here opened and explained; and all within the compaſs of very few verſes. From an altar with an inſcription "to "the unknown God," and that there were altars at Athens with ſuch an inſcription we have the atteſtation of ſeveral ancient heathen authors, he taketh occaſion to reprove them for their great plurality of gods,

gods, and " him whom they ignorantly worſhipped to declare unto " them." It might be contrary to the laws of Athens for any one to recommend and introduce a *new* or *ſtrange* god; but he could not well be ſubject to the penalty of the law only for declaring him whom they already worſhipped without knowing him. The opportunity was fair, and he improves it to the greateſt advantage. He brancheth out his diſcourſe into ſeveral particulars.—That " God made the world " and all things therein:" Which propoſition though agreeable enough to the general belief and opinion, was yet directly contrary both to the Epicureans and to the Peripatetics; the former of whom attributed the formation of the world to the fortuitous concourſe of atoms without any intervention of the deity, and the latter maintained that the world was not created at all, and that all things had continued as they now are from all eternity.—" That ſeeing he is Lord of hea- " ven and earth, he dwelleth not in temples made with hands, " neither is worſhipped with mens hands, as though he needed " any thing, ſeeing he giveth to all life and breath and all " things:" Which was leveled not ſo much againſt the philoſophers as againſt the popular religion of Athens; for the philoſophers ſeldom or never ſacrificed unleſs in compliance with the cuſtom of their country, and even the Epicureans themſelves admitted the ſelf-ſufficiency of the Godhead: but the people believed very abſurdly that there were local gods, that the deity notwithſtanding his immenſity might be confined within temples, and notwithſtanding his all-ſufficiency was fed with the fat and fumes of ſacrifices, as if he could really ſtand in need of any ſuſtenance, who " giveth to all life " and breath and all things."—That " he hath made of one blood " all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and " hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of " their habitation:" Which was not only oppoſed to the Epicureans who derived the beginning of human race from the mere effects of matter and motion, and to the Peripatetics or Ariſtotelians who denied mankind to have any beginning at all having ſubſiſted in eternal ſucceſſions; but was moreover oppoſed to the gene-

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ral pride and conceit of the people of Athens, who boaſted themſelves to be Aborigines, to be deſcended from none other ſtock or race of men, but to be themſelves originals and natives of their own country.—That " they ſhould ſeek the Lord, if haply they " might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every " one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being:" Which fundamental truth with the greateſt propriety and elegance he confirms by a quotation from one of their own poets, Aratus, the Cilician, his own countryman, who lived above three hundred years before, and in whoſe aſtronomical poem this hemiſtich is ſtill extant. " As certain alſo of your own poets have ſaid, For we are alſo his " ofſpring." An evident proof that he knew how to illuſtrate divinity with the graces of claſſical learning, and was no ſtranger to a taſte and politeneſs worthy of an Attic audience,—That " foraſmuch then " as we are the ofſpring of God, we ought not to think that the God-" head is like unto gold or ſilver or ſtone, graven by art and man's " device:" Which was plainly pointed at the groſs idolatry of the lower people, who thought the very idols themſelves to be gods, and terminated their worſhip in them.—That " the times of this ignorance " God winked at" or overlooked; as he ſaid before to the people of Lyſtra, " In former times God ſuffered all nations to walk in their own " ways; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:" Which doctrin of the neceſſity of repentance muſt have been very mortifying to the pride and vanity of the philoſophers, and eſpecially of the Stoics, whoſe wiſe man was equal if not ſuperior to God himſelf.—" Becauſe he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world " in righteouſneſs by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he " hath given aſſurance unto all men, in that he hath raiſed him from " the dead: Till now they had heard him with ſilence and attention, becauſe though every period of his diſcourſe glanced at ſome of his hearers, yet it fell in with the notions of others, and he had not before touched and offended all together: but " when they heard of the re-" ſurrection of the dead, ſome mocked," the Epicureans and the men of wit and pleaſure, " and others ſaid," the Platoniſts and the graver

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ſort of his audience, " We will hear thee again of this matter," putting it off to a more convenient ſeaſon. " So Paul departed from " among them," leaving them as they deſerved to themſelves. " How- " beit certain men clave unto him, and believed;" a diminutive expreſſion to ſignify that he made but very few converts; among whom the principal were " Dionyſius the Areopagite," who is ſaid to have been afterwards conſtituted the firſt biſhop of Athens, " and a woman " named Damaris," ſome ſay his wife, but being mentioned diſtinctly and by name, I ſhould rather ſuppoſe ſhe had no relation to him. His ſucceſs upon the whole was very inconſiderable among the Athenians, and we do not read that he ever returned to viſit them again, as he did the inhabitants of Lyſtra.

Paul had arrived at Miletus, and " haſting, if it were poſſible for " him, to be at Jeruſalem the day of Pentecoſt," he had not time to take Epheſus in his way; and therefore ſent his ſummons thither for the elders of the church to attend him at Miletus. (Acts XX. 16—38.) This was, as I may ſay, his laſt viſitation; and he taketh his leave of them in the moſt noble and generous, in the moſt cordial and affectionate manner. Conſcious of his own integrity, he appeals to them as witneſſes of his behaviour from his firſt coming into Aſia; how he had " ſerved the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears," and many trials and " temptations" through the inſidiuos malice of the Jews; how he had preached the word among them with the utmoſt ſincerity; had concealed no profitable truth, but had freely and openly communicated every thing of moment, preſſing equally upon Jews and Gentiles the neceſſity of " repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jeſus " Chriſt." He had a ſtrong impulſe of the ſpirit to go to Jeruſalem, without knowing particularly what might befall him there; only this he knew in general, that " bonds and afflictions" were to be his lot and portion in every city: " but I make account of nothing," ſays he with the courage of an apoſtle and martyr, " I make account of no- " thing, neither hold I my life dear unto myſelf, ſo that I might finiſh " my courſe with joy, and the miniſtry which I have received of the " Lord Jeſus, to teſtify the goſpel of the grace of God." He plainly foreſaw,

foreſaw, and was fully perſuaded in his own mind, that after this time they "ſhould ſee his face no more;" and therefore he called them "to "record that he was pure from the blood of all men;" if any periſhed, it was through their own fault; "for he had not ſhunned to declare "unto them all the counſel of God." As he ſhould never have another opportunity of ſeeing them, he charges them in the firſt place to be careful of their own behaviour, and then to be faithful and diligent in their paſtoral office, in "feeding all the flock," which Chriſt had purchaſed with his own blood, and which the Holy Ghoſt had committed to their care: And this caution was the more neceſſary, becauſe he foreſaw dangers would ariſe both from without and from within; from Judaizing falſe apoſtles, who ſhould "enter in among them," and grievouſly vex and haraſs the church; and from falſe teachers, heretics and ſchiſmatics, who ſhould "ariſe among themſelves," and advance perverſe and ſtrange doctrins "to draw away diſciples after them. "Therefore watch, and remember that by the ſpace of three years I "ceaſed not to warn every one night and day with tears." He then concludes with "commending them to God and to the word of his "grace," as the ſureſt means of edification here, and the firmeſt foundation of happineſs hereafter. But in the concluſion with all his tenderneſs and concern for them, he ſtill profeſſes his own diſintereſtedneſs. He had "coveted no man's ſilver or gold or apparel." He had not ſo much as inſiſted upon that moſt juſt and equitable rule, that "they "who preach the goſpel ſhould live of the goſpel." He had even wrought with his own hands, that he might "miniſter to his own ne-"ceſſities, and to them who were with him:" and he had frequently exhorted them to the like labor of love and charity, and ever to bear in mind the memorable ſaying of the Lord Jeſus, "It is more bleſſed "to give than to receive;" which ſaying is not recorded in any of the goſpels, but was delivered down by tradition, and at that time was well known and remembered among Chriſtians. He finiſhed his charge with "kneeling down and praying with them all." This is properly *a charge to the clergy*; and ſurely there never was a more excellent one, for therein all along as we have ſeen, the heart ſpeaketh in every word;

word; and the reſolution and firmneſs on his ſide raiſed the greater tenderneſs and compaſſion on theirs. What anſwer could they return to ſo generous and pathetic a valediction, but what they did? "They "all wept ſore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kiſſed him." No wonder they melted into tears who were preſent at ſo moving a ſcene, for at this diſtance we can hardly refrain our tears in reading it. They were much affected by every part of his diſcourſe, but "ſorrowed moſt "of all for the words which he had ſpoken that they ſhould ſee his "face no more." However they were deſirous to attend him as long as they could, and ſhowed their laſt reſpects by "accompanying him "unto the ſhip."

When Paul came to Jeruſalem, he was in imminent danger of his life; and being brought before the council, he made uſe of an innocent ſtratagem to ſow diſſenſion among his enemies, and thereby for himſelf to eſcape their fury. (Acts XXIII. 6—9.) For perceiving the council to conſiſt partly of Phariſees and partly of Sadducees, he cried out among them, "Men and brethren, I am a Phariſee, the ſon of a "Phariſee; of the hope and reſurrection of the dead I am called in "queſtion." His words are expreſſive of the general reſurrection, but refer particularly to the reſurrection of Jeſus and of the dead in conſequence of his reſurrection. This little artifice was attended with the deſired ſucceſs; for the Sadducees denying a reſurrection and ſpirit, and the Phariſees aſſerting both, there immediately aroſe a great diſſenſion between them, to ſuch a degree that his moſt powerful proſecutors became his ſtrongeſt advocates, "the Scribes that were of the Phariſees "part" contending for him and ſaying, "We find no evil in this man, "but if a ſpirit or an angel hath ſpoken to him, let us not fight againſt "God." A manifeſt and undeniable argument, that it is lawful to make uſe of all innocent means for our preſervation, and that the apoſtle was no viſionary or enthuſiaſt, but knew how with the wiſdom of the ſerpent to defend the innocence of the dove.

What a handſome apology doth he make for himſelf before King Agrippa? (Acts XXVI.) With what art and inſinuation doth he begin! "I think myſelf happy, King Agrippa, becauſe I ſhall anſwer for

" myſelf this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am ac-
" cuſed of the Jews: Eſpecially, becauſe I know thee to be expert in
" all cuſtoms and queſtions which are among the Jews. Wherefore I
" beſeech thee to hear me patiently." With what a beautiful turn and addreſs doth he conclude! " King Agrippa, believeſt thou the
" prophets? I know that thou believeſt." The King himſelf cannot but acknowlege the ſuperior force of his reaſon and eloquence. " Then
" Agrippa ſaid unto Paul, Almoſt thou perſuadeſt me to be a Chriſ-
" tian." Every body muſt be charmed with the ſpirit and good manners of the apoſtle, the decency and delicacy of his anſwer; " I would
" to God that not only thou, but alſo all that hear me this day, were
" both almoſt, and altogether ſuch as I am, except theſe bonds." King Agrippa and the new Roman governor Feſtus, upon hearing the whole, agreed that he had " done nothing worthy of death or of
" bonds," and that he " might have been ſet at liberty if he had not
" appealed unto Cæſar," an inferior officer having not the power to diſmiſs an appeal to a ſuperior magiſtrate, eſpecially to the emperor.

Thus much may ſuffice for his *diſcourſes*. And for his *epiſtles*, what a treaſure of divinity and morality is there! with what force of argument and expreſſion are the doctrinal points diſcuſſed in the body of each epiſtle! with what artleſs magnificence, better than all the quaint and ſtudied elegance, are the moral precepts heaped together in the concluſion? He diſclaims (1 Cor. II. 4.) " the enticing words of man's
" wiſdom." Rhetoric was no part of his buſineſs or deſign; and yet perhaps there are ſome ſtrains of rhetoric to be found in his writings equal to any in the fineſt writers whatever. His very enemies, who ſaid (2 Cor. X. 10.) that " his bodily preſence was weak and his ſpeech
" contemptible," yet could not help owning that " his letters were
" weighty and powerful."

Is there any thing in any of the heathen moraliſts comparable to that fine deſcription of charity in the XIIIth chapter of the firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians? " Speaking with the tongues of men and of angels" is nothing in compariſon of charity; and " the tongues of men and of
" angels" can never exceed this deſcription. All the powers of logic and

and rhetoric are to be ſeen and felt in the XVth chapter of the ſame epiſtle; and what ſolemnity doth it add to the moſt ſolemn ſervice of our liturgy, *the burial of the dead!* We may perceive the apoſtle's fondneſs for the Greek poets by an inſtance in this chapter; for even in this great and important argument he citeth a verſe out of a Greek comedian. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Milton in his preface to Samſon Agoniſtes ſaith, it is a verſe of Euripides: but it is ſtill extant among the fragments of Menander, p. 79. of Le Clerc's edition. It is not impoſſible that ſuch a moral ſentence might become proverbial among the poets.

Is any epiſtle in Tully or Pliny wrought up with ſo moving addreſs as that ſhort one to Philemon? Every word hath its force and propriety. With what dignity and authority doth he entreat, though a priſoner! with what condeſcenſion and humility doth he command, though an apoſtle! For the fuller comprehenſion and juſter ſenſe of the many beauties of this compoſition, I would recommend to your peruſal a moſt excellent ſermon of Biſhop Smalrige, which is a judicious and elegant commentary on this epiſtle. Then peruſe the XXIſt epiſtle of the 9th book of Pliny, which is written much upon the ſame ſubject; and you will find it cold and flat and inſipid upon the compariſon. Pliny would fain ſay ſomething, the apoſtle hath urged every thing that can be ſaid with propriety upon the occaſion. Pliny is too affected to be affecting; the apoſtle will take poſſeſſion of your heart, and move your compaſſion whether you will or not.

But it is impoſſible to particularize all the fine paſſages in St. Paul's diſcourſes and writings. We might as well pretend to number all the ſtars in the galaxy. Read him but attentively (for indeed he requires an attentive reader) and here he will convince your reaſon, there he will engage your affections; now awaken your fears, now inflame your hopes; now aſtoniſh, now tranſport you; and command all your paſſions, as a maſterly hand ſinketh into the ſtrings of a well-tuned inſtrument. It is true (2 Pet. III. 16.) there are "ſome things" in him "hard to "be underſtood:" and are there not obſcure paſſages in Plato and the beſt authors Greek or Roman? The faults of St. Paul's writings are

faults on the beſt ſide. He ſtudied the matter more than the phraſe, the ſenſe more than the ſound. Where he is obſcure, he is generally obſcure, as I may ſay, through too much brightneſs, having more ideas than words; whereas the common fault of writers is, that they have more words than ideas.

What can be the end and reſult of ſuch a diſcourſe as this, but that we ſhould diligently read and frequently meditate on our apoſtle's Acts and Epiſtles. You may perceive by this imperfect ſketch, that he is very deſerving of our time and attention, conſidered not only as an apoſtle, but even as an author. As he had a more learned education than any other of the apoſtles, ſo he labored more abundantly than they all. As his writings are larger, ſo they are likewiſe better, and exceed in weight as well as in number. He may not improperly be called *a ſacred claſſic*; and if Longinus an eminent heathen critic could rank Paul of Tarſus among the moſt famous orators, we Chriſtians ſurely may with the beſt reaſon ſtudy and eſteem his writings; and the more we ſtudy, the more we ſhall eſteem them. We might with the Chriſtian mentioned by (3) St. Chryſoſtom demonſtrate St. Paul to be a more logical and eloquent writer than Plato. But this was his leaſt and loweſt praiſe; his greateſt merit conſiſted not in his "excellency "of ſpeech or of wiſdom, (1 Cor. II. 4, 5.) but in demonſtration of "the Spirit and of power, That our faith ſhould not ſtand in the wiſ-"dom of men, but in the power of God."

(3) Chryſoſt. Hom. 3. in 1 Epiſt. ad Corinthios. Tom. 10. p. 20. Edit. Benedict.

DIS-

DISSERTATION XXXVIII.

St. PAUL before FELIX.

ONE of the three things, which St. Auſtin is ſaid to have wiſhed for, was to have ſeen St. Paul in the pulpit. And if ſuch a wiſh could take effect, and one might have heard that great apoſtle ſpeaking upon any occaſion, there is not perhaps any more important and more affecting, that one would ſooner chooſe to have been witneſs to, than his diſcourſes before the Roman governor Felix. (Acts XXIV.) St. Paul was now at Cæſarea, the Roman governor's uſual place of reſidence, a priſoner on account of a proſecution of the Jews. As ſoon as the high-prieſt and his other accuſers were come down from Jeruſalem, he was called forth: and a certain orator named Tertullus opened the charge againſt him. But in what a fulſome ſtrain of flattery doth this corrupt orator addreſs this corrupt and flagitious governor; (ver. 2, 3.) "Seeing that by thee we "enjoy great quietneſs, and that very worthy deeds are done unto "this nation by thy providence, We accept it always and in all "places, moſt noble Felix, with all thankfulneſs!" In what a different manner, and much more juſt and decent, doth St. Paul begin his defenſe; (ver. 10.) "Foraſmuch as I know that thou haſt been of "many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more chearfully anſwer "for myſelf!" He diſdains to ingratiate himſelf at the expenſe of truth, and with great openneſs and plainneſs refutes every article of the charge againſt him. However Felix ſtill detained him a priſoner at large, for a farther hearing and examination, when Lyſias the chief captain ſhould come down from Jeruſalem to give teſtimony concerning him. In the mean time Felix went for his wife; (ver. 24.) "and "after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Druſilla, which

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" was a Jeweſs, he ſent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith " in Chriſt." What a remarkable ſcene muſt this have been, the apoſtle giving an account of his faith to the governor who was a Heathen, and to his wife who was a Jeweſs. It is not expreſly ſaid that Druſilla was preſent, but it is implied, for otherwiſe her name would hardly have been introduced into ſo ſuccinct a narration; ſhe would hardly have been brought upon the ſtage only to diſappear again. Bernice with Agrippa " entered into the place of hearing" (Acts XXV. 23.) and why not Druſilla with Felix? The governor ſent for Paul, we may preſume, not out of any religious principle or with intention to be perſuaded if he was convinced; but out of covetouſneſs " hoping that money ſhould have been given him of Paul that he " might looſe him," or out of a ſpirit of curioſity to hear what this apologiſt could offer in behalf of an odd ſect which was now beginning to make ſome noiſe in the world. But people's curioſity is not always gratified; they may chance to pay dearly for it; they do not always hear what they would, but ſometimes what they would not; and there may be ſome truth to cut them to the quick, where perhaps they leaſt expect it. Such ſeemeth to have been the caſe with Felix; for (ver. 25.) " as Paul reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance, and " judgment to come, Felix trembled." Inſtead of the priſoner's trembling before his judge, the judge trembles before his priſoner, the great Roman governor before a poor tent-maker! A very extraordinary occurrence this! and we may conſider it partly as the effect of St. Paul's eloquence, and partly as the effect of remorſe of conſcience in Felix: and in either view it will furniſh us with ſeveral not unedifying nor unuſeful reflections. " Felix trembled."

I. We may conſider it in the 1ſt place partly as the effect of *St. Paul's eloquence.* For without doubt the ſame truths from every mouth would not have been equally affecting. Few could have thundered and lightened like St. Paul ſo to have ſtruck and confounded their judge. The ſtory ſaith that " he reaſoned." What he ſpoke was not a florid empty declamation, but abounded with argument and good ſenſe; he did not only aſſert, but proved what he aſſerted.

And

And certainly the beſt way of preaching and ſpeaking too before any aſſembly, is firſt to gain their heads before you attempt their hearts, firſt to convince their underſtandings before you endevor to rouze their paſſions. If any man had ever the gift of the ſpirit and the light within, St. Paul had ſurely as much as any, and yet he was far from neglecting reaſon as a carnal or worldly thing; but on the contrary endevors to eſtabliſh the doctrins of revelation by arguments of reaſon. If any man was ever infallible and ſpoke as the oracle of God, St. Paul did ſurely as much as any, and yet he was far from expecting a blind aſſent and reſignation in his hearers, but on the contrary ſhoweth by his example as well as by his precepts, that he would have all men (1 Theſſ. V. 21.) "prove all things and hold faſt that which is good." "He reaſoned," as his cuſtom was; and the ſubjects which he reaſoned about were "righteouſneſs, temperance and judgment to "come." Not that theſe were the only topics upon which he inſiſted; for it is ſaid expreſly, that Felix "ſent for Paul, and heard "him concerning the faith in Chriſt." He ſpoke therefore of other matters as well as of theſe; but theſe he inſiſted upon particularly, and therefore theſe are particularly mentioned. However by this inſtance the apoſtle ſhoweth plainly that he thought one great end of revealed religion was to advance and enforce natural religion, and the preaching of morality was indeed the preaching of Chriſtianity.

But St. Paul had a farther view in this diſcourſe; and when "he "reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance and judgment to come," he inſiſted upon topics which were particularly adapted to his audience. The diſcourſe is wonderfully appoſit and proper, "of righ-"teouſneſs or juſtice," before a corrupt, avaricious, and unjuſt governor; "of temperance or continence" before a man and a woman who had married in violation of all laws, her former huſband ſtill living; "and of judgment to come," which will be a righteous tribunal indeed, where no man's poverty will expoſe him, no man's power will protect him, but all will be condemned who ſhall be found guilty of ſuch hainous offenſes. For that ſuch were the characters of Felix and Druſilla, all hiſtory that ſpeaketh of them teſtifies. Tacitus, the

the (1) Roman hiſtorian, in two places giveth Felix the character of a moſt cruel, libidinous, and tyrannical governor. And the (2) Jewiſh hiſtorian, Joſephus relates how he enticed Druſilla the daughter of Herod Agrippa, from Azizus king of the Emeſenes her huſband, and married her, and had a child by her. Joſephus (3) alſo records another abominable action of which he was guilty, how he corrupted an intimate friend of Jonathan the high-prieſt, to aſſaſſinate him only for remonſtrating againſt his conduct. Upon the whole his government was ſo corrupt and grievous, that after his return to Rome the rulers of the Jews followed him thither with their complaints to the emperor; but his brother Pallas being prime miniſter and favorite at that time, we do not find that they obtained any redreſs. With what propriety therefore doth the apoſtle diſcourſe before ſuch an auditory "of righteouſneſs, temperance, and judgment to "come:" and are not his ingenuity and addreſs admirable, in ſuiting ſo the ſubject to the perſons and occaſion, and his honeſt zeal and courage ſtill more admirable, in daring to aſſert thoſe truths, which it was neceſſary for them indeed to hear, but which it was dangerous for himſelf to ſpeak? And what an excellent pattern is here for the miniſters of the goſpel not ſo much to ſpeak *ſmooth* things as *right* things, not to ſpare even vice in high places, not to be afraid of mentioning hell and the terrors of the Lord in the politeſt congregations, but (2 Tim. IV. 2.) to "preach the word, be inſtant in ſeaſon "and out of ſeaſon, to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-ſuffering "and doctrin!" A truth fitly ſpoken may pierce the heart of the greateſt and proudeſt offender; as here before his priſoner, ſtruck with his addreſs, convinced by his reaſoning, overawed by his eloquence, "Felix trembled."

II. But we are not to look upon this incident altogether as the effect of St. Paul's eloquence; we may conſider it, as we propoſed in the 2d place,

(1) Felix Judææ impoſitus & cuncta malefacta ſibi impune ratus tantâ potentiâ ſubnixo. Tacit. Annal. L. 12.

Felix per omnem ſævitiam ac libidinem jus regium ſervili ingenio exercuit, Druſillâ in matrimonium acceptâ. Id. Hiſt. L. 5.

(2) Φηλιξ, θεασαμενος ταυτην, (Druſillam) και γαρ ην καλλει των ατων διαφερουσα, λαμβανει της γυναικος

place, partly as the effect of *remorſe* of *conſcience* in *Felix*. For without doubt had Felix been more virtuous and innocent, he would not have been ſo ſtruck and confounded. St. Paul reaſoned "of "righteouſneſs temperance and judgment to come" in general terms. The conſcience of Felix made the particular application, and brought the diſcourſe home to himſelf. That faithful witneſs repreſented to him, how deficient he had been in thoſe virtues, which the apoſtle was recommending, and conſequently what great reaſon he had to apprehend the future judgment of God: and therefore forgetting the ſtate and authority of a governor, in the preſence of the court, he is ſo poſſeſſed with the fear of another tribunal, that he ſitteth trembling in his own. Oh! the force of truth not to be withſtood! Oh! the pangs and horrors of a guilty mind not to be ſtifled or concealed! He doth not whiſper his fears in private to the partner of his crime and his bed; but ſhoweth them in his very countenance, and trembles before his attendents, trembles before his priſoner. And can any infidel pretend, that religion is nothing more than a ſtate-engin, a politic device to keep only children and ſubjects in awe, when here a great governor, and brother to the firſt Miniſter of the empire at that time, is ſo far convinced of its truth and reality, as even to ſhake at the voice of an apoſtle? This ſingle inſtance ſhoweth the natural power of conſcience in man; what a faithful monitor we carry within our own breaſts to direct us to virtue and to dehort us from vice; the beſt of friends and companions if we do well, the worſt of enemies and accuſers if we do evil; and though we may chance to lull it aſleep for a time, yet ſome accidents ſome occaſions or other will awaken it, and it will at leaſt ſometimes be heard, it will not it cannot always be ſilenced.

It is obſerved indeed that St. Paul's diſcourſe had not the ſame effect upon Druſilla. "Felix trembled," but it is not ſaid that Dru-

γαικὸς επιθυμιαν, και επειθε τον ανδρα καταλιπειν αυτῳ γημασθαι ——ἡ δε κακως πρατθεισα— παραβηναι τοὺς πατρια νομιμα πειθεται, και τῳ Φηλικι γημασθαι. τεκουσα δε εξ αυτου παιδα προσηγορευσεν Αγγριππαν.

Joſeph. Antiq. L. 20. c. 6. Edit. Hudſon.

(3) Ibid. Cap. 7.

ſilla trembled too. However the diſcourſe might have had the ſame effect upon her that it had upon him; and yet Felix only, as being the principal perſon, be mentioned. But if it had not the ſame effect upon her that it had upon him, yet what doth this argue more than that the corruption of the beſt is the worſt, and that women, when they give themſelves up to commit iniquity, I know not how put off their nature, and are commonly worſe proſtitutes and more abandoned than men? She had ſinned too againſt greater light and conviction, She being a Jeweſs and He only a Heathen; and the more any one ſinneth, the more the conſcience is hardened in ſinning. This too perhaps was one of her gay thoughtleſs hours, for the ſoul is not at all times equally ſuſceptible of good impreſſions. The ſame diſcourſe might have affected her in a different manner at another opportunity. For I very much queſtion whether it is poſſible for human nature to be ſo dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, as to be quite deaf to all the calls of honor, all the cries of conſcience.

Even they, who have pretended to ridicule the notion of conſcience, and have endevored all they can to eradicate this religious terror out of the minds of others, have never yet been able to conquer or ſuppreſs it in themſelves. It is related of the famous Author of the Leviathan, a man who by his writings hath done infinite prejudice to the cauſe of virtue and religion, that He could never endure to be in the dark alone; and why ſhould a philoſopher be more afraid of darkneſs than of light? There can be no reaſon in the nature of things. The reaſon muſt be in the fears and horrors of his own guilty mind. It is reported of another ſince, the Author of the Oracles of reaſon, that whenever it thundered, he was wont to be ſo terrified, that immediately (like Caligula formerly) he made up his windows, crept into the bed, or any where to hide himſelf; which ſurely was very ſtrange, that One, who could make a jeſt of the terrors of hell, ſhould be ſo frightened at a clap of thunder. And thus, as the Wiſdom of Solomon ſays of the Egyptian magicians of old time, (Wiſd. XVII. 8, 11.) "They that promiſed to drive away terrors and trou-
"bles from a ſick ſoul, were ſick themſelves of fear worthy to be
"laughed

" laughed at; For," as he argues, " wickedneſs condemned by her " own witneſs is very timorous, and always forecaſteth grievous things." The principle is in nature, and it ſeemeth not poſſible for art entirely to overcome it. As long as you can diſcern the difference between moral good and evil, as long as you have a mind capable of reflecting upon your own actions, ſo long you will have a conſcience accuſing or elſe excuſing you, and painful ſenſations will follow from the one, pleaſing ſenſations from the other.

Nor is it any reaſonable objection to this doctrin, that ſome ſinners appear always daring and intrepid, and paſs their days ſeemingly in gaiety as great as their wickedneſs, as if they had no conſcience to accuſe them, and there was no God to puniſh them. For certainly all tempers are not alike, as all metals are not of the ſame hardneſs and conſiſtency. Some men are naturally more hardened and obdurate, more ſtupid and inſenſible than others: but becauſe they ſeem to have little ſenſe or feeling, would you therefore conclude that they have no ſenſe or feeling at all? Or perhaps they have been trained up in wickedneſs from their youth, and no wonder then they have (1 Tim. IV. 2.) " their conſcience ſeared with a hot iron," and cuſtom is in a manner become a ſecond nature. Or perhaps you ſee them only during their lucid intervals; for this fever of the mind is not always burning, the fit is not always upon them, but ſometimes intermits. At another time you would think them as miſerable, as now they appear happy. But if they could wear an eternal ſmile upon their face, yet how do you know what anguiſh lieth at their heart? Alas! if the curtain was to be drawn away, what a diſmal ſcene would be preſented there! They may laugh at conſcience, but they will feel it. The maſk may be put on for a time; but could you behold them in ſolitude, in diſtreſs, in ſickneſs, the caſe would be very much altered, and you would find them deſponding and deſpairing, reſtleſs and impatient, wearied of life and almoſt ready to put an end to it by violent means, ſo that with full conviction you would ſubſcribe to the truth of Solomon's obſervation, (Prov. XVIII. 14.) " The ſpirit of " a man will ſuſtain his infirmity, but a wounded ſpirit who can

" bear?" Nay even ſuppoſing (what is hardly to be ſuppoſed) that they ſhould die ſeemingly eaſy, as they have lived ſeemingly happy: yet this may be all affectation; they may only be acting a part; as there are criminals, who will deny the fact of which they are guilty to the very laſt. But even if it ſhould all be real, yet becauſe there are ſome monſters in the moral world as well as in the natural, would you therefore deny that there is any regular courſe, any ſettled laws in the one or the other? becauſe there are ſome idiots and madmen, would you therefore not define a man to be a reaſonable creature? A particular inſtance or two conclude nothing againſt a general rule; and the general rule in this caſe, that ſcripture, reaſon, experience, all confirm is this, (Iſa. LVII. 20, 21.) " The wicked are like the " troubled ſea when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and " dirt; there is no peace ſaith my God to the wicked."

As you regard then the peace and quiet of your mind, (Acts XXIV. 16.) " have always a conſcience void of offenſe toward God and to- " ward men." A prudent man would not willingly make an enemy of any body, and much leſs would he raiſe in himſelf an enemy to himſelf. There is no enjoyment of any thing in life without peace of mind; and there is no peace of mind without virtue and innocence. Guilt is always its own puniſhment, and begins that hell in our boſoms here, which will be our eternal portion hereafter, unleſs we take care to prevent it by timely repentance. For this is the proper uſe of conſcience, this is the gracious purpoſe of Almighty God in placing that reflective faculty in our breaſts, that from the ſenſe of evil we may learn to avoid it, that from the dread of puniſhment we may be wiſe in time to prevent it, that judging and condemning ourſelves we may not be judged and condemned of the Lord, that from the pain and anguiſh which we feel after the commiſſion of ſin in this world, we may be warned to eſcape the greater torments of the world to come, (2 Cor. VII. 10.) " our godly ſorrow working repentance to " ſalvation not to be repented of." Happy had it been for Felix, if he had been thus affected; but he diſmiſſes his good thoughts and the apoſtle together, " Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient

" ſeaſon

" ſeaſon I will call for thee." " He ſent for him" indeed afterwards, " and communed with him," but it was not out of any religious, but merely from an avaricious motive, " hoping that money ſhould " have been given him of Paul that he might looſe him." He had heard Paul ſay, that he had " brought alms to his nation and offerings," and he might ſuppoſe that he could not want money for his own uſes and occaſions. Thus the lightning, that darted upon his ſoul, vaniſhed almoſt as ſoon as it appeared; and I wiſh there are not too many, like Felix, having only ſhort tranſient fits of religion and never improving them into habits. They have a particular engagement upon their hands, they are obliged to meet ſome company, they muſt attend urgent buſineſs; and ſo frame to themſelves twenty idle excuſes, and put off the neceſſary work of repentance and reformation to a more convenient ſeaſon. But there can be no ſeaſon to make our peace with God ſo convenient as the preſent; and ſuch is the uncertainty of human life, that if it be not done now, it may be done never. Oh! let us therefore conſider " in this our day the things " which belong to our peace," before " they are hid from our eyes." If not for God's ſake, yet for our own ſake, let us never offend againſt the light and conviction of conſcience; but if we have offended, let us liſten to its reproofs, and make peace again as ſoon as ever we can. And ſo (1 John III. 19, 20, 21.) " we ſhall aſſure our hearts before " God; For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart " and knoweth all things; But if our heart condemn us not, then " have we confidence toward God."

DIS-

DISSERTATION XXXIX.

St. PAUL at MELITA.

ST. Paul having appealed unto the Roman Emperor was now going a priſoner to Rome. In his voyage it happened the veſſel was ſhipwracked, but the men "eſcaped all ſafe to land." In the foregoing chapter the apoſtle had foretold this diſtreſs and danger, "We muſt be "caſt," ſaid he, "upon a certain iland," but yet he aſſured them, "There ſhall be no loſs of any man's life among you, but of the "ſhip." Accordingly the event fully anſwered the prediction, "they "were caſt upon a certain iland, and they eſcaped all ſafe to land. "And when they were eſcaped, (Acts XXVIII. 1.) then they knew "that the iland was called Melita," now called Malta, an iland in the Mediterranean between Sicily and Barbary, famous for an order of knights ſettled there, who were at firſt knights of Jeruſalem, then of Rhodes, now of Malta; and in this iland I think they ſtill ſhow a place called the arrival or haven of St. Paul.

A very learned and ingenious (1) man hath attempted to prove, that the Melita we ſpeak of in the Mediterranean below Sicily was not the iland upon which St. Paul was caſt away, but another of the ſame name up in the Adriatic gulf near the coaſt of Illyria, now called Melede. Something plauſible may be ſaid on both ſides; ſome circumſtances before the ſhipwrack ſeem to favor this latter opinion, others again after the ſhipwrack rather confirm the former. St. Luke ſaith expreſly, that "when the fourteenth night was come, they were driven "up and down in Adria." This iland conſequently muſt needs be ſomewhere in *Adria*, and the Illyrian Melita was in the Adriatic gulf ſtrictly ſo called. But the word *Adria* was of large extent and ſignification;

(1) See Mr. Bryant's Diſſertation of the iland Melita, in his Obſervations relating to various parts of

fication; for not only the poets uſe it for the great Ionian ſea, reaching to the iſthmus of Corinth, but Strabo likewiſe ſaith that it comprehends the Ionian ſea; Ptolemy extends it to Sicily on the weſt, and to Peloponneſus and Crete on the eaſt; and Oroſius and other later authors include in it not only the Sicilian and Cretan ſeas, but alſo the Libyan to the coaſt of Africa. "A ſhip of Alexandria" was much more likely to winter in the Mediterranean than in the Illyrian Melita: and when they ſet ſail, the direct and ready courſe from the Mediterranean Melita was to "Syracuſe," and thence to "Rhegium," and from thence to "Puteoli;" whereas from the Illyrian Melita they would probably have landed at Brunduſium or ſome other port on that ſide of Italy, and not have paſſed by "Rhegium" to "Syracuſe," and from "Syra-"cuſe" to "Rhegium" back again. Any one needs only look upon his map to be convinced which is the beſt and eaſieſt courſe, and moſt likely to be taken. I cannot depart therefore from the commonly received opinion, which hath ſo many probable arguments to ſupport it, ſo many great authorities to favor it, and the general tradition of ſo many ages and nations to confirm it.

As ſoon as Paul and his companions were got ſafe to ſhore, the people of the iland treated them with great humanity and kindneſs; (ver. 2.) "And the barbarous people ſhowed us no little kindneſs," as the hiſtorian proceeds who was himſelf one of the company, "for they kindled "a fire and received us every one becauſe of the preſent rain and be-"cauſe of the cold." In ſuch diſtreſſes and difficulties every one is willing to ſhift for himſelf; (ver. 3.) "And when Paul had gathered "a bundle of ſticks," and was laying them "on the fire, there came "a viper," forced from its cover by the heat and enraged "faſtened "on his hand." When the people of the iland ſaw this ſad accident befall him, they preſently concluded that becauſe he was the moſt unfortunate, he muſt certainly be the moſt wicked of the company; (ver. 4.) "and ſaid among themſelves, No doubt this man is a mur-"derer whom though he hath eſcaped the ſea, yet vengeance ſuffereth

of ancient hiſtory: but ſee likewiſe on the other ſide Bocharti Geog. Sacr. Pars alt. Lib. 1. cap. 26.

"not

" not to live." But natural cauſes do not always produce natural effects, if God pleaſes to ſuſpend them; for the apoſtle (ver. 5.) " ſhook " off the" viper " into the fire and felt no harm. (ver. 6.) Howbeit " they" ſtill " looked" expecting " when he ſhould have ſwollen" with the poiſon " or fallen down dead ſuddenly," the venom of ſuch creatures being very ſtrong and almoſt immediate death in thoſe hot countries; " but after they had looked a great while and ſaw no harm come " to him, they changed their minds and ſaid that he was a god." Let us ſtop here, and reflect a little upon the particulars of this relation. The incidents are not only uncommon, but will afford ample matter of inſtruction, without wire-drawing or refining too much upon them; and at the ſame time may ſerve to ſhow how the hiſtorical parts of ſcripture will furniſh us with uſeful leſſons as well as the preceptive and moral, if we will but duly meditate upon them.

The firſt paſſage that will ſtrike us in this relation is the *civility* of theſe, as they are called, *Barbarians*. St. Luke denominates them ſo, purely in compliance with the common form of ſpeaking. Writing in Greek, he expreſſeth himſelf after the manner of the Greeks, who proudly called all people Barbarians who were not of their own country or colonies from thence: and the natives of this iland were the deſcendents of the Phenicians or Carthaginians. But experience and knowlege of the world may eaſily evince the vanity and falſity of this narrow way of thinking; and the inhabitants of this little iland, though they were called *barbarians*, yet proved themſelves otherwiſe by their actions, and behaved really much better than many of thoſe who paſs for civilized people. Theſe Heathens did not, as ſome even Chriſtians perhaps would have done, ſtrip plunder and murder the perſons who were ſhipwracked upon their coaſt; but on the contrary " ſhowed them no little " kindneſs, for they kindled a fire and received them every one becauſe " of the preſent rain, and becauſe of the cold." And certainly hoſpitality to ſtrangers, compaſſion to perſons in diſtreſs, are not only our moſt amiable qualities as we are men, but even our diſtinguiſhing ornaments as we are Chriſtians. " Be not forgetful," ſays the apoſtle, (Heb. XIII. 2.) " to entertain ſtrangers, for thereby ſome have enter-

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" tained angels unawares." Theſe Heathens could ſee the reaſonableneſs of ſuch a practice by the light of nature. Humanity prompted them to that, which is farther enforced upon us by Chriſtianity; and thereby they entertained, if I may ſo ſpeak, a human angel, a meſſenger of God, one who brought them the glad tidings of the goſpel, and planted Chriſtianity among them, where it ſeemeth to have taken root and grown ever ſince. " Be not" therefore " forgetful to entertain " ſtrangers, for thereby ſome have entertained angels," ſome have entertained apoſtles, " unawares." Such an exhortation may perhaps be more proper in a nation, that in former ages at leaſt was not very remarkable for its civility and hoſpitality to ſtrangers, or rather was very remarkable for the contrary. ' Britannos hoſpitibus feros,' " the Britons cruel " to ſtrangers" is the character with which the politeſt (2) Roman poet hath branded us to all ages; and this account of us is confirmed by the general ſuffrage of antiquity, as if we were divided from the whole world in our manners as much as in our ſituation, and our natures partook of the roughneſs and boiſterouſneſs of that element, with which we are ſurrounded. Nay, there are even now complaints of the ſame kind, though perhaps not to the ſame degree. Our people are generally reckoned more averſe from ſtrangers, more ſilent and ſullen, leſs civil and obliging, than our neighbours on the continent. Yet at the ſame time it is certain there is not a nation upon earth that is fonder of foreign commodities and foreign performers in every kind, there is not a nation that more affects foreign faſhions and every thing that is foreign; and the inſtances of our folly and extravagance in this kind, as they exceed all former ages, ſo will hardly be believed by any future. The truth is we are ſparing of that civility which coſteth us nothing, and laviſh of that which coſteth us a great deal: and it would be better for us, if we were more liberal of our compliments, and more frugal of our treaſure; we ſhould be leſs ridiculous and more reſpected.

2. Another reflection that naturally reſults from this relation is that the beſt of men and the greateſt favorites of heaven are liable to misfortunes as well as other people; they are not only involved in the ge-

(2) Horace.

neral calamities which befall mankind, but are alſo ſubject to particular accidents and diſaſters of their own. The apoſtle, we ſee, was not only expoſed with the reſt to the danger of a ſhipwrack, but on ſhore another misfortune happened to him in particular; for "when he had "gathered a bundle of ſticks and laid them on the fire, there came a "viper out of the fire, and faſtened on his hand." And theſe things happened unto him for enſamples; they were not for the puniſhment or correction of any of his ſins, but as our Saviour ſaid of the man who was born blind, (John IX. 3.) "that the works of God ſhould be "made manifeſt in him." Whoever therefore thou art who lieſt under any afflictions, if thy afflictions are not the effects and conſequences of thy own ſins and follies as generally they may be diſcerned whether they are or not, comfort thyſelf that misfortunes are no certain marks and tokens of the divine diſpleaſure; they are only for the exerciſe of thy patience, for the trial and illuſtration of thy virtue, and "will work" for thee "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Thou ſeeſt that the bleſſed apoſtle St. Paul was liable to misfortunes as much or more than other men; and is thy piety ſo much greater as to plead the privilege of exemption? Nay "the captain of our ſalvation" himſelf was "made perfect through ſufferings;" and wilt thou refuſe to drink of the cup that he drunk of, wilt thou be aſhamed to take up thy croſs and follow him? Forget not "the exhortation which ſpeaketh "unto thee" as á ſon, (Heb. XII. 5, 6.) "My ſon deſpiſe not thou "the chaſtning of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; "for whom the Lord loveth he chaſtneth, and ſcourgeth every ſon "whom he receiveth."

3. Theſe barbarians as they are called not only behaved with humanity and civility to the perſons who were ſhipwracked upon their coaſt, but had alſo ſome notions of a God and a providence, and of a particular vengeance that was due to murder, and did not fail to purſue it. They knew ſomething not only of their duty to men, but likewiſe of their duty to God. And indeed there is hardly any nation how rude and barbarous ſoever, how remote and diſtant ſoever from the commerce and converſation of the reſt of mankind; there is hardly

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any nation, I ſay, without theſe general notions of religion, ſo careful hath God been not to leave himſelf without witneſs. Theſe notions are ſome of the firſt and moſt obvious diſcoveries of natural light and knowlege; they are ſo agreeable to reaſon, that reaſon preſently apprehends the truth and fitneſs of them; there is no neceſſity of learning, there is no need of great proficiency in arts and ſciences; our natural faculties from the contemplation of the world and the things of the world will lead us to the acknowlegement of a God and a providence, and will eaſily mark the difference between virtue and vice, eſpecially in ſuch flagrant inſtances as *murder*, which of all ſins is the moſt ſhocking to human nature, maketh our very blood to run cold and filleth us with horror at the thought of it. No wonder men by the light of nature conclude that a more immediate curſe attends ſuch a crime, and vengeance ſurer than any blood-hound purſues it. There is not only all the reaſon in the world for thinking ſo, but experience farther confirms it. For it is ſurpriſing by what ſtrange accidents, by what unheeded unſuſpected methods, murder is generally diſcovered, though contrived with the deepeſt malice and perpetrated with the greateſt ſecrecy. A viſible curſe for ever after attends the authors and contrivers of it, and uſually ſooner or later juſtice overtakes them. I forbear to ſpecify any facts of this kind. Every one's memory will ſupply him with particular inſtances. If ſuch vengeance be due to the murder of a ſingle perſon, of how much ſorer puniſhment ſhall they be thought worthy, who in the wantonneſs of their wars, out of pride or ambition, cruelty or revenge, ſacrifice the lives of thouſands and tens of thouſands? And yet the world commonly is ſo fooliſh or unjuſt as to magnify theſe men for heroes; when they are in truth and reality the butchers of mankind. The rack or the gallows ſhall be the portion of an ordinary aſſaſſin; while a Cæſar or Alexander ſhall be celebrated by the tongues and pens of all poſterity. If the ſaying is true in any ſenſe more than another, it is certainly in this, (Luke VI. 26.) "Woe "unto you when all men ſhall ſpeak well of you."

But 4thly though theſe barbarians were right in their principle that a particular vengeance was due to murder, yet they were wrong

in the application of it to St. Paul; "No doubt this man is a mur-"derer, whom though he hath eſcaped the ſea, yet vengeance ſuf-"fereth not to live." And this paſſage may ſerve as a caution to us, how we interpret the misfortunes of others as puniſhments for their ſins. There is nothing more common among men than this way of thinking and judging, and yet nothing in which they are more liable to be miſtaken. Thus much indeed we muſt allow, that if there had never been any ſin in the world there would never have been any trouble; and if this life contained the whole period of men's exiſtence, we might certainly collect the exact proportion of their virtues or vices from their proſperity or adverſity; whoever was the moſt fortunate would be the beſt man, and whoever was the moſt unfortunate would be the worſt. But as this life is deſigned only for a ſtate of probation, and the next for a ſtate of retribution; as here men are only upon trial, and hereafter ſhall receive the reward of their works, it is impoſſible for us in many caſes (Eccleſ. IX. 1.) "to know either love or hatred," mercy or judgment "by all that "is before us;" there may be (Eccleſ. VIII. 14.) "righteous men "to whom it happeneth according to the work of the wicked," and there may be "wicked men to whom it happeneth according to the "work of the righteous." Not but temporal puniſhments are often inflicted upon men for their wickedneſs, and ſometimes we may plainly diſcern the hand of God in the execution of his judgments. When Pharaoh, who had ordered the male children of the Hebrews to be drowned, was himſelf drowned with all his hoſt; when Adonibezek, who had cut off the thumbs and great toes of threeſcore and ten kings, had his own thumbs and great toes cut off; when in the place where Ahab and Jezebel cauſed the dogs to lick the blood of Naboth, the dogs alſo licked their blood; when any ſuch calamity overtakes a ſinner, when his ſuffering is ſo conformable to his ſin, I think we may without heſitating believe it to be God's work, we may without any breach of charity pronounce it to be a judgment from heaven upon him; (Judg. I. 7.) "as He hath done, ſo the "Lord hath requited him." But generally ſpeaking we cannot be too,

too cautious and tender in making ſuch reflections; we know too little of men and things to ſay for certain what is a judgment, and what is not; there may be mercy in judgment, as there may be judgment in mercy; and it would better become us to err on the modeſt and charitable ſide than on the preſumptuous and uncharitable; for preſumptuous it is with regard to God, and prying into the myſteries of his providence; and uncharitable it is with regard to men, when we cannot ſound their hearts and know exactly their merits or demerits. (Rom. XIV. 4.) "Who art thou therefore that judgeſt another? "to his own maſter he ſtandeth or falleth." The proper uſe that we are to make of men's temporal afflictions is not by them to judge of their ſpiritual condition, to arraign and condemn others as delinquents and criminals, but to infer from thence the neceſſity of repentance for ourſelves. And this is the uſe that our Saviour himſelf directs us to make of ſuch occurrences; (Luke XIII. 1, &c.) "Suppoſe ye "that theſe Galileans, whoſe blood Pilate mingled with their ſacri- "fices, were ſinners above all the Galileans, becauſe they ſuffered "ſuch things? I tell you nay, but except ye repent ye ſhall all like- "wiſe periſh. Or thoſe eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam "fell and ſlew them, think ye that they were ſinners above all men "that dwelt in Jeruſalem? I tell you nay; but except ye repent ye "ſhall all likewiſe periſh."

5. We have here a ſpecimen of that miraculous power which accompanied the apoſtles; for St. Paul "ſhook off" the viper "into "the fire and felt no harm." The poiſon of ſuch creatures is exceeding ſtrong and almoſt immediate death, as we ſaid before, in thoſe hot countries; but poiſon loſeth its force, and the moſt noxious creature becomes innocent in the hands of an apoſtle. This incident is miraculous in itſelf, and appears ſtill more miraculous, as our Saviour had foretold and promiſed that thus it ſhould be; (Mark XVI. 17, 18.) "And theſe ſigns ſhall follow them that believe, in my name ſhall they "caſt out devils, they ſhall ſpeak with new tongues, they ſhall TAKE "UP SERPENTS, and if they drink any deadly thing it ſhall not hurt "them." So that it was not only doing a miracle, but doing a miracle

racle that was ſignified beforehand by the Spirit of prophecy. "Be-"hold I give you power over ſerpents and ſcorpions," (Luke X. 19.) ſaid our Saviour to his diſciples upon another occaſion, "and nothing "ſhall by any means hurt you;" and perhaps the reaſon for aſſigning this power ſo particularly, was becauſe the devil had in that ſhape ſo long deluded mankind, or at leaſt it was the ſymbol by which he was uſually repreſented. However that be, this miracle was very proper to awaken the conſideration of the people of the iland, to convince them that an extraordinary perſon was come among them, and to procure the greater reverence to his perſon, and better attention to his doctrin: and this, no doubt, with the other miracles which he wrought contributed greatly to the eaſier reception of Chriſtianity among them. So wonderfully do all events conſpire to the glory of God; and ſo ſeaſonably was the apoſtle preſerved in the criſis and inſtant of danger! (Pſal. XXXIV. 19.) "Many are the afflictions of "the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

6. We have here likewiſe an inſtance of the fickleneſs and inconſtancy of the people, now reviling, now admiring, and changing from one extreme to the other; for "after they had looked a great "while and ſaw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and "ſaid that he was a god." At firſt they were really very hoſpitable, their hoſpitality was ſoon loſt in their cenſoriouſneſs, and their cenſoriouſneſs was turned into almoſt adoration. This adventure was juſt the reverſe of what befell the apoſtle at Lyſtra. For there he was firſt taken for a "god," and they were going to do ſacrifice unto him; afterwards their minds were ſo wrought upon and changed, that they ſuffered him to be "ſtoned." Here they firſt reviled him as a "murderer," and then they were for adoring him as a "god." So very uncertain a thing is popularity, often gained and often loſt, not only without any reaſon, but even againſt all reaſon. For it is too common with men to judge by appearances, to conceive unreaſonable prejudices, or entertain partial fondneſſes without much conſideration: And as they take up their opinions haſtily, it is no wonder they are liable to change, approve what they before condemned,

and

and condemn what they before approved, and then they ſeldom know any moderation or meaſure in things; they are all in extremes, as violent in their cenſures as extravagant in their commendations; now making a man a "murderer," and now a "god." The "noiſe "of the waves and the madneſs of the people," (Pſal. LXV. 7.) are ſometimes compared together. They are both ſubject to their ebbs and their flows. The winds and humors as various as the winds raiſe and depreſs both the one and the other.

And therefore laſtly we ſee how a wiſe man ſhould behave in ſuch circumſtances by the example of the apoſtle; who when he was reviled as a murderer, reviled not again, but "ſhook off the beaſt in-"to the fire and felt no harm;" and when he was magnified as a "god," he was no more affected with the one than the other, no more elevated with their vain applauſe than dejected with their vain ſlander. And certainly a wiſe man ſhould neither turn aſide to the right hand nor to the left, but proceed regularly and reſolutely in his duty, without conſidering what ignorant people may ſay for him or againſt him, as little diſturbed with their cenſure as pleaſed with their commendation. Not but reputation is a valuable thing, and we cannot pay too much regard to the cenſures of the world, when they are well founded. But what ſignifies all the applauſe of men, when we are conſcious to ourſelves that our hearts are not right in the ſight of God, and we do not really deſerve it? It is no better than gilding a ſtatue of lead, which contributes little or nothing to the real and intrinſic value. The lead is ſtill but lead, and the man is not one jot wiſer or better for all the praiſes beſtowed upon him. On the other hand what is calumny to a man, when he is ſatisfied of his own virtue and integrity, when he is ſupported by a good cauſe and a good conſcience? It is but like throwing of mud and dirt into a pure fountain, which ſoon purges and refines itſelf, and the farther it runs, the clearer it grows. Virtue is not leſs virtue, but rather the more, for detraction and ſlander; the greater its trial, and the greater its reward; and our Saviour commands us to glory in ſuch infamy as honor, in ſuch curſing as bleſſing; (Matt. V. 11, 12.) "Bleſſed are ye when men ſhall revile you and ſay all

"manner

" manner of evil againſt you falſly for my ſake; Rejoice and be " exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven." It is the fate of the beſt men to be decried as much by ſome, as they are extolled by others; for it was the fate of the apoſtles before us to live (2 Cor. VI. 8.) in " honor and diſhonor," in " evil report and good report." All that we have to do is, if our friends commend us, let us take care to deſerve their commendations; if our enemies revile us, let us live ſo that no body may believe them. And particularly let us remember that not by the ſayings of others, but by our own actions we ſhall be judged at the laſt great day. And in the mean time let us endevor to pleaſe God rather than men, and be ready every one of us to ſay with the apoſtle; (1 Cor. IV. 3, &c.) " With me it is a very ſmall thing, " that I ſhould be judged of you or of man's judgment, but he that " judgeth me is the Lord: Therefore judge nothing before the time " until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things " of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts; and " then ſhall every man have praiſe of God."

DISSERTATION XL.

On Confirmation.

CONFIRMATION being a rite of the Church of England, as well as of the primitive Church, it may be proper to deduce it from its ſource and origin, the better to ſatisfy us both of the reaſonableneſs of the thing, and of the manner of performing it. We cannot pretend to ſay that it is of divine, but it will be found to be of apoſtolical inſtitution.

Strong

Strong as the national prejudices were of the Jews to the Samaritans, yet Chriſtian charity was ſtronger, and able to prevail over them. For Philip, one of the ſeven deacons, and the ſecond in order after Stephen, upon the diſperſion of the church at Jeruſalem, went to Samaria, to publiſh the glad tidings of the goſpel in that city. (Acts VIII. 5.) "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Chriſt "unto them." It is much to the honor of the Samaritans, that the ſame doctrin, which was perſecuted in Jeruſalem, was gladly received at Samaria. For (ver. 6.) "the people with one accord gave heed "unto thoſe things which Philip ſpake, hearing and ſeeing the mira-"cles which he did." His miracles, like the other goſpel-miracles, were of the ſalutary kind, the caſting out of devils, and the healing of infirmities and diſeaſes. "For (ver. 7.) unclean ſpirits, crying with "loud voice, came out of many that were poſſeſſed with them; and "many taken with palſies, and that were lame, were healed." And (ver. 8.) "there was great joy in that city:" the people were not only rejoiced at the miraculous cures wrought among them, but alſo received the word with joy and gladneſs of heart. They had before been bewitched by the ſorceries of Simon Magus; but now they gave greater attention to the divine truth and the divine power manifeſted by Philip, and both men and women were baptized in the name of the Lord Jeſus. (ver. 9 and 12.) "There was a certain man called Simon, "who beforetime in the ſame city uſed ſorcery, and bewitched the "people of Samaria: But when they believed Philip, preaching the "things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jeſus "Chriſt, they were baptized both men and women." So ſucceſsfully did Philip imitate the example of his lord and maſter in preaching the goſpel to the Samaritans, and for his labor of love in converting this and other cities, he was afterwards (XXI. 8, 9.) dignified with the title of "the evangeliſt," and his daughters were indued with the gift of prophecy. When the apoſtles, who notwithſtanding the perſecution raging at Jeruſalem ſtill remained in that city, had heard of Philip's ſucceſs in preaching the goſpel at Samaria, they ſent thither two of their number Peter and John to confirm the new converts. (ver. 14.)

"Now when the apoſtles who were at Jeruſalem heard that Samaria "had received the word of God, they ſent unto them Peter and John." As yet the new converts were only baptized, and had not received the holy Ghoſt: but when the apoſtles were arrived, they prayed for the deſcent of the holy Ghoſt, and layed their hands on them; and ſuch was the bleſſed effect of their prayer and impoſition of hands, that the holy Ghoſt was immediately conferred on the true believers. (ver. 15, 16, 17.) "Who when they were come down, prayed for them that "they might receive the holy Ghoſt: (For as yet he was fallen upon "none of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord "Jeſus.) Then layed they their hands on them, and they received "the holy Ghoſt." This hiſtory may furniſh us with ſeveral uſeful reflections relative to *Confirmation*; a ſubject at no time unſeaſonable or improper either for thoſe who have already received, or thoſe who are yet to receive, the benefits of this miniſtration.

I. We may infer from hence the expediency and uſefulneſs of confirmation after baptiſm. For we ſee that after the Samaritans were converted and baptized by Philip, the apoſtles ſent two of their number to confirm the new converts, to pray for them, and to lay their hands on them, that they might receive the holy Ghoſt. In like manner the diſciples at Epheſus (Acts XIX. 5, 6.) "were" firſt "baptized in the "name of the Lord Jeſus: And when Paul had layed his hands upon "them, the holy Ghoſt came on them; and they ſpake with tongues "and propheſied." And the divine author of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews reckons "the doctrin of baptiſm and of laying on of hands" among the fundamentals of the Chriſtian religion. (Heb. VI. 1, 2.) "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrin of Chriſt, let us go "on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance "from dead works, and of faith towards God, Of the doctrin of bap-"tiſms, and of laying on of hands, and of reſurrection of the dead, "and

(1) Dehinc manus imponitur, per benedictionem advocans et invitans Spiritum ſanctum. Tertull. de Baptiſmo. Sect. 8. p. 226.

Caro abluitur, ut anima emaculetur.—Caro manus impoſitione adumbratur, ut et anima Spiritu illuminetur. De Reſurrectione Carnis, Sect. p. 8. 330. Edit. Rigaltii, Paris 1675.

(2) Quia legitimum et eccleſiaſticum baptiſma conſecuti fuerant, baptizari eos ultra non oportebat: ſed tantummodo quod deerat, id a Petro et Joanne

" and of eternal judgment." By which " impoſition of hands," mentioned immediately with " baptiſm," the beſt commentators both ancient and modern have always underſtood the holy rite of confirmation; and Calvin himſelf remarks upon the place, that this ſingle text abundantly teſtifies that confirmation was of apoſtolical inſtitution.

Nor was this ceremony only of temporary inſtitution, and limited to the days of the apoſtles, but was continually practiſed in all the ſucceeding ages of the church. The tradition is evidently derived from ſcripture, and is both primitive and univerſal; and next to the plain words of ſcripture, the traditive interpretation and general practice of the church of God is the beſt argument for any ritual miniſtration. Tertullian, who is very exact in his accounts of the cuſtoms of the primitive church, having ſpoken of the rites of baptiſm, ſays (1) that ' after baptiſm the hand is impoſed, by bleſſing ' calling for and inviting the holy Spirit:' and again in another place, ſpeaking of baptiſm and confirmation, ' the body is waſhed, ' that the ſoul may be cleanſed; the body is overſhadowed by impo- ' ſition of hands, that the ſoul alſo may be illuminated by the Spirit.' St. Cyprian, relating this very hiſtory of the Samaritan converts (2), ſays, that ' having obtained lawful and eccleſiaſtical baptiſm, there ' was no neceſſity for them to be baptized again; but only what was ' wanting, that was done by Peter and John, that prayer being ' made for them, and hands impoſed, the holy Spirit might be in- ' voked and infuſed upon them. Which now alſo' ſays he, ' is ' practiſed among us, that they who are baptized in the church, may ' be preſented to the governors of the church, and by our prayer and ' impoſition of hands may obtain the holy Spirit, and be conſummated ' with the Lord's ſignature,' that is be made perfect Chriſtians by confirmation. We might multiply quotations without end, but only one other teſtimony ſhall be cited from (3) St. Jerome, which is very full

Joanne factum eſt, ut oratione pro eis habita, et manu impoſita, invocaretur et infunderetur ſuper eos Spiritus ſanctus. Quod nunc quoque apud nos geritur, ut qui in eccleſia baptizantur, præpoſitis eccleſiæ offerantur, et per noſtram orationem ac manus impoſitionem, Spiritum ſanctum conſequantur, et ſignaculo Dominico conſummentur. Cyprian. Epiſt. 73. p. 308. Edit. Felli.

(3) An neſcis etiam eccleſiarum hunc eſſe morem, ut baptizatis poſtea manus imponantur, et

full to our purpoſe. 'Know you not,' ſays he, 'that this is the cuſ-
'tom of the churches, that after perſons are baptized, hands ſhould
'be impoſed, and the holy Ghoſt invocated? Do you inquire where
'it is written? In the Acts of the Apoſtles. But although the au-
'thority of ſcripture was wanting, the conſent of the whole chriſtian
'world in this particular would have the force of a command.' The church of England therefore had good authority for ſaying as ſhe doth in her Canons, that "it hath been a ſolemn, ancient, and laudable "cuſtom in the church of God, continued from the apoſtles times, "that all biſhops ſhould lay their hands upon children baptized and "inſtructed in the catechiſm of chriſtian religion, praying over them "and bleſſing them." Can. LX.

In the primitive times confirmation was uſually adminiſtered ſoon after baptiſm; and there was then very good reaſon for it, moſt of the new converts being adult or grown up to years of diſcretion. But now when almoſt all who are baptized are infants, it is more properly deferred till they arrive to an age capable of being inſtructed and grounded in the principles of the Chriſtian religion. If confirmation was judged expedient for adult perſons who were baptized, how much more neceſſary is it that thoſe who were baptized when infants, ſhould at the proper age ſolemnly renew their baptiſmal vow, that in their own perſons they ſhould confirm and ratify what their godfathers and godmothers promiſed in their names, that they ſhould make a free and open profeſſion of the Chriſtian religion before the congregation, and by prayer and impoſition of hands be recommended to the grace and bleſſing of God? It is obſervable too, that the ſame kind of cuſtom hath prevailed in the Jewiſh as well as in the Chriſtian church, the reaſon of the thing ſtill holding good in all churches and in all religions. As the children of Chriſtians are admitted into covenant with God by baptiſm; ſo the children of the Jews were by circumciſion. As the children of Chriſtians are catechiſed, and then brought to be confirmed;

ita invocetur Spiritus ſanctus? Exigis ubi ſcriptum ſit? In Actibus Apoſtolorum. Etiam ſi ſcripturæ auctoritas non ſubeſſet, totius orbis in hanc partem conſenſus inſtar præcepti obtineret. Hieron. adverſ. Luciferianos. 2da pars. Tom. 4. col. 294. Edit. Benedict.

(4) Bux-

ed; ſo (4) the children of the Jews were carefully inſtructed in the principles of their religion, and at the age of thirteen years made public profeſſion of their faith, and engaged before the congregation to obſerve the law of Moſes. After which engagement ſolemn prayers were made for them, that they might perſevere in their profeſſion; and they were thenceforwards called *the children of the precept*, that is ſubject to the precepts of the law, and accountable every one for his own ſins. No particular age is fixed for confirmation by the church of England; but ſhe declares in one of her rubrics, that "ſo ſoon as "children are come to a competent age, and can ſay in their mother "tongue the Creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten Commandments, "and alſo can anſwer to the other queſtions of the Catechiſm, they "ſhall be brought to the Biſhop." The wiſe and prudent (5) governors of our church have directed that thoſe who are to be confirmed ſhould be full *fourteen* years of age or upwards, and wiſh that parents would be perſuaded to think the age of *ſixteen* a more proper time for their children to be confirmed. No one ſhould be thought of a proper age to be confirmed, till he was of a proper age alſo to partake of the holy communion.

II. From hence we ſee the reaſon why the office of confirmation is performed by the biſhop, and by none of the other inferior miniſters of the goſpel. For though Philip converted and baptized the Samaritans, yet being only a deacon he did not take upon him to confirm them; but the apoſtles ſent two of their number from Jeruſalem to Samaria for that purpoſe, to pray for them and to lay their hands on them, that they might receive the holy Ghoſt. In like manner after the diſciples at Epheſus (Acts XIX. 5, 6.) had been "baptized in the "name of the Lord Jeſus, Paul laid his hands upon them, and the "holy Ghoſt came on them." It is not ſaid particularly who baptized them, but no leſs perſon than the apoſtle confirmed them. The biſhops ſucceeding to the apoſtles, this office devolved upon them: and therefore St. Cyprian in the paſſage before cited affirms, that they

(4) Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. Cap. 7. Grot. in Luc. II. 42.

(5) See Biſhop Gibſon's Directions about Confirmation.

(6) ἰθεν.

they who are baptized in the church are preſented to the governors of the church, that by *our* prayer and impoſition of hands (ſays he, for he was himſelf a biſhop) they may obtain the holy Spirit, and be conſummated with the Lord's ſignature. St. Chryſoſtome aſking the reaſon why the Samaritans, who were baptized by Philip, did not receive the holy Spirit, anſwers that Philip being only one of the ſeven deacons had not the power to give the holy Spirit, for this was the gift and prerogative of the apoſtles alone; (6) whence alſo we ſee the biſhops, and none others, perform this office. St. Jerome, though in the main no great friend to the epiſcopal order, yet allows that (7) it was the cuſtom of the churches for the biſhop to lay his hands and invoke the holy Spirit over thoſe who were baptized by prieſts and deacons; that this practice was derived from the Acts of the Apoſtles; that the ſafety of the church depends upon the dignity of the high prieſt, to whom if an extraordinary power be not granted, there would be made in the churches as many ſchiſms as prieſts. So truly primitive and apoſtolical in her inſtitutions and practices is the church to which we have the happineſs to belong.

III. We may obſerve from hence alſo the manner of adminiſtring confirmation, and the ceremonies uſed by the apoſtles in the celebration of it: and theſe were none others than *prayer* and *impoſition of hands*. For when the apoſtles "were come down, they "prayed" for the Samaritans, "that they might receive the holy "Ghoſt: Then layed they their hands on them, and they received "the holy Ghoſt." Sometimes the whole is expreſſed by a part, by *impoſition of hands*; but *prayer* is always underſtood, which was always an eſſential part in all ſacred offices. It is true the ancient church added other ceremonies, as chriſm or anointing, and ſigning with the ſign of the croſs. The church of Rome hath ſuperadded many more, and hath incumbered this, as well as all other religious offices, with ſuch a load of vain obſervances, that religion is ſunk under

(6) ὅθεν καὶ τὰς κορυφαίους, οὐκ ἄλλους τινὰς, εἶναι δεῖν τοῦτο ποιοῦντας. ideoque et Coryphæos, non alios, videre eſt hoc facere. Chryſoſt. In Act. Apoſt. Hom. 18. p. 146. Vol. 9. Edit. Benedict.

(7) Non quidem abnuo hanc eſſe eccleſiarum conſuetudinem &c. Eccleſiæ ſalus in ſummi ſacerdotis

der them: and therefore the church of England is highly to be commended for reducing this office to its primitive ſimplicity, and uſing only ſuch ceremonies as were uſed by the apoſtles themſelves, *prayer* and *impoſition of hands*; prayer as the means of begging a bleſſing, impoſition of hands as the means of conveying it; the one as ſupplicant to God, the other as authoritative to men.

IV. From hence we may collect in the laſt place the benefits and advantages of confirmation. In the primitive times it was attended with extraordinary manifeſtations and gifts of the holy Ghoſt, ſuited to the then infant ſtate of the church; but now the Chriſtian religion is fully proved and eſtabliſhed, we muſt expect only the ſecret and ordinary communications of the holy Spirit, which we may reaſonably hope to receive in this regular adminiſtration, and without which it is impoſſible to perform the covenant that we have undertaken. The benefits and advantages of confirmation are thus very well ſummed up by (8) a pious and uſeful writer. "It tends to preſerve the unity of "the church, by making men ſenſible, that their obedience is due "to ſuch eccleſiaſtical governors, who are indued with all thoſe "powers which were left by the apoſtles to their ſucceſſors. It is "a new engagement to a chriſtian life, and is a laſting admonition "and check not to diſhonor or deſert our chriſtian profeſſion. It is "a teſtimony of God's favor and goodneſs to thoſe who receive it, "when his lawful miniſter declares, that God accepts their proficiency, and advances them to a higher degree in the church, by "placing them among the faithful, and thereby giving them a title "to approach the holy table of the Lord. It conveys divine grace "to encounter our ſpiritual enemies, and to enable us to perform "what we undertake."

Confirmation being a renewal of our baptiſmal vow, and a ſolemn engagement in our own perſon to perform what was promiſed in our name at baptiſm, it is like baptiſm, whereof it is the completion, to

cerdotis dignitate pendet, cui ſi non exors quædam et ab omnibus eminens detur poteſtas, tot in eccleſiis efficientur ſchiſmata, quot ſacerdotes. Hieron. adverſ. Luciferianos. Col. 295. 2da pars. Tom. 4. Edit. Benedict.

(8) See Nelſon's Feaſts and Faſts, p. 542.

be

be celebrated once only. And thoſe who are to be confirmed, *before confirmation*, ſhould be made acquainted with the meaning and uſe of this inſtitution, and whoſe proper office it is to adminiſter it: ſhould be carefully inſtructed in the nature of thoſe holy promiſes, which they are to renew, and their obligation to perform them, even though they were not to renew them: ſhould attain a competent degree of knowlege both of what they are to believe, and what they are to practiſe, with regard to God, their neighbour, and themſelves: ſhould farther prepare themſelves by ſerious meditation and prayer, and for this purpoſe frequently read over the offices of baptiſm and confirmation. *At the time of confirmation* they ſhould behave themſelves decently and reverently, conſidering the great importance of the duty that they are then performing: ſhould give due attention to what the biſhop ſays, and make their reſponſes diſtinctly and audibly: ſhould particularly attend to the prayer which the biſhop repeats over them, and ſay Amen at the end of it with true devotion: ſhould not depart immediately after impoſition of hands, but ſtay till the whole ſervice ſhall be gone through, and they ſhall be regularly diſmiſſed with the bleſſing. *After confirmation* they ſhould return humble and hearty thanks to God, for calling them to the knowlege of his grace and faith in him: ſhould, as ſoon as they have a convenient opportunity, partake of the holy communion, to which they now have the privilege of admiſſion: ſhould frequently reflect and meditate upon the ſolemn vow and covenant that they have made: ſhould ſteddily perſevere in their holy purpoſes and reſolutions, and (Hebr. X. 39.) be "not of them who draw back unto perdition, but "of them who believe to the ſaving of the ſoul:" ſhould continually beg of God to ſtrengthen and confirm them more and more with his holy Spirit, and (Hebr. VI. 1.) "leaving the principles of the doc-"trin of Chriſt, go on unto perfection," and (Philip. III. 14.) "preſs toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of "God in Chriſt Jeſus." In a word they ſhould faithfully diſcharge their parts and duties, or otherwiſe no religious inſtitutions will have any effect. Let them fulfil their promiſes, and God will certainly fulfil

fulfil his; and be their God, and they ſhall be his people; enjoy the comforts of his holy Spirit in this world, and be made partakers of a bleſſed immortality in the world to come.

DISSERTATION XLI.

On Love of Novelty.

IT is uſeful as well as curious to obſerve the different humors and manners of different people. As every perſon is diſtinguiſhed by a particular turn of genius and character, ſo there is likewiſe a particular turn of genius and character peculiar almoſt to every nation. Some of theſe characters ſtrike us ſtrongly in almoſt every walk of life, and a ſkilful eye may trace and diſcover more: but there is ſcarce any perſon who doth not plainly perceive a difference; and the vivacity and vanity of a Frenchman, the ſtatelineſs and haughtineſs of a Spaniard, the avarice and extortion of a Jew and the like are become almoſt proverbial. The ſacred writers themſelves ſometimes condeſcend to take notice of this particularity of character in particular people and nations. St. Paul hath branded the Cretians with this character from one of their own poets, (Tit. I. 12.) "The Cretians "are always liers, evil beaſts, ſlow bellies." St. Luke, a phyſician and man of litterature himſelf, thus characterizeth the Athenians. (Acts XVII. 21.) "All the Athenians and ſtrangers which were there ſpent "their time in nothing elſe but either to tell or to hear ſome new "thing." And indeed moſt authors of antiquity repreſent them as a pragmatical people; and their famous orator Demoſthenes, as Grotius hath remarked, giveth much the ſame character of them, and in terms almoſt equivalent to thoſe employed by St. Luke. St. Luke by

his manner of mentioning it plainly condemns it; and he chargeth it not only upon "all the Athenians" but likewiſe upon "the ſtran-"gers which were there," as men uſually conform to the manners of the place where they are, and nothing is more common than for travelers to catch the infection of foreign fopperies in foreign countries. It is obſervable alſo that he ſaith firſt "to tell" and then "to hear "ſome new thing," their greateſt pleaſure was to talk and harangue, but ſometimes for want of a ſubject they were content to become humble auditors. *Love of novelty* then was the fault of the Athenians; and is it not the fault of another nation too, who have been ſtiled *a nation of politicians*, and whoſe higheſt delight it is to be "telling" or "hearing ſome new thing?" But what then? muſt we delight in nothing new? Are we to reverence every thing that is old? No certainly that extreme would be full as ridiculous as the other: and therefore it may be proper to conſider, what ſort of love of novelty is to be cenſured and condemned, and afterwards to ſhow the abſurdity of it and inconveniences attending it, in order to cure men of this impertinent ſpirit, that it may never be ſaid of us, as it was ſaid of the Athenians, that we "ſpent our time in nothing elſe but either to "tell or to hear ſome new thing."

I. In the firſt place let us conſider what ſort of love of novelty is to be cenſured and condemned. In the general it may be ſaid that the love of novelty is natural to the ſoul of man. There is a commendable as well as a vicious curioſity, and we ought to encourage the one as much as to ſuppreſs the other. It ought to be encouraged in children and young people eſpecially; and is a ſign of a promiſing genius for them to be curious in aſking queſtions and inquiſitive after knowlege. It argues narrowneſs and meanneſs of ſoul to be tied up to old forms and methods, ſo as never to vary or depart in the leaſt from them. It cannot be ſaid of every thing, as it is ſaid of "wine," that "the old "is better," and the new is not comparable to it. Some things were never good at firſt, and have only the ſtamp of antiquity to recommend them, but ſurely of all folly old folly is the worſt. Other things, which might be very proper in their ſeaſons, may be as improper at preſent

preſent through ſome alteration of times or change of circumſtances, and are therefore better aboliſhed than retained. God forbid that the world ſhould become to a ſtand; truth and knowlege are not yet grown to their full maturity; time and culture may ripen and bring them to greater perfection: and thoſe are the perſons to be commended who are daily adding to the common ſtock of learning, and are not content to live upon their forefathers knowlege, any more than upon their forefathers eſtate, without making improvements. There are old books indeed more precious than old gold; but every new book is not therefore to be condemned. The old once were new; and what is it that renders them ſo valuable, but their being excellent originals: and who would not prefer an excellent original now to any copy? I hate a writer who ſervilely imitates and borrows all his thoughts from others, and diſcovers no tokens of any genius or invention of his own. Thoſe are properly authors, who are inventors, who ſtrike out new knowlege and teach us ſomething that we had not learned before; or at leaſt cloath old knowlege in a new dreſs with new beauties of ſtile and new illuſtrations and reflections of their own; and if they borrow any thing from ancient authors, they improve it and may be ſaid to repay it again with intereſt. It is the better for paſſing through their hands, and like old money new-minted appears with greater luſtre and fuller weight than it did before. Nay I think novelty not only commendable when it promotes truth and knowlege, but allowable when it is innocent, and ſerveth for nothing more than to chequer and diſtinguiſh life with a little variety. For we are not barely to live, but to make life as pleaſing and agreeable as we can; and it is our duty to the author and giver of life as well as to ourſelves.

But though love of novelty may be right in theſe inſtances, yet it becomes wrong (as every thing becomes wrong) when it is carried into extremes, and degenerates into an idle and impertinent curioſity, either to the prejudice of ourſelves or others.—It is right and one would deſire to have a juſt knowlege and diſcernment of the characters and manners of men, and eſpecially of thoſe with whom we maintain any intercourſe and converſation: but on the other hand it is certainly

wrong to be too curious and prying into their affairs and circumſtances, to hold an office of inquiſition as it were upon their actions, to ſpy into the privacies and dive into the ſecrets of families, to concern ourſelves or intermeddle at all with things which do not belong to us, and as the Scripture expreſſeth it, to be (1 Pet. IV. 15.) "buſie bodies "in other mens matters," (1 Tim. V. 13.) "wandring about from "houſe to houſe ſpeaking things which we ought not."—It is without doubt a reaſonable curioſity, and may be attended both with pleaſure and improvement, to deſire to ſee foreign countries, to viſit their monuments antiquities and rarities of every kind, to import the knowlege of other nations their cuſtoms and manners their laws and conſtitutions into our own; and well-written relations of theſe things muſt give every ſenſible reader a proportionable ſhare of the pleaſure and improvement and without any of the toil and trouble: but on the other hand what can be more abſurd and unreaſonable than the vanity of traveling which we ſee in ſome perſons without the uſe and improvement, preferring every thing of other countries to their own, affecting foreign faſhions only becauſe they are foreign, and even their written accounts no ways to be depended upon, more properly novels and romances than voyages and travels, and filled not ſo much with true as with wonderful and ſurpriſing adventures.—A concern for the public is every one's duty, and our private welfare is ſo much intereſted in the welfare of the ſtate, that no wonder we are curious to know ſomething both of foreign and domeſtic occurrences, and indeed that man is hardly fit to live in the world who can be inſenſible to what paſſeth in it: but on the other hand can any thing be more completely ridiculous than for private perſons to be continually buſying their heads with news and politics, and to neglect their proper affairs in ſettling the affairs of Europe.—It is undoubtedly right to regard truth and argument more than cuſtom and preſcription, to change our opinions with reaſon rather than ſtill to perſiſt againſt reaſon; and we are expreſly commanded not to build our faith upon the authority of fathers, (Matt. XXIII. 9.) to "call no man father upon earth," but to (1 Pet. III. 15.) "be ready always to give a reaſon of the hope

"that

" that is in us," (1 Theſſ. V. 21.) to " prove all things and hold " faſt that which is good ;" and (Matt. XIII. 52.) " every ſcribe in- " ſtructed unto the kingdom of heaven is likened unto an houſholder " bringing forth out of his treaſure things new" as well as " old :" but on the other hand it is as undoubtedly wrong for men to make needleſs innovations and alterations in religion, and embrace any opinions not becauſe they are true but only becauſe they are new and contrary to the ſentiments of the reſt of mankind, to have itching ears and run after other preachers and teachers than are agreeable to the conſtitution, (1 John IV. 1.) to " believe every ſpirit without trying the " ſpirits whether they are of God," to be (Eph. IV. 14.) " toſſed to " and fro like children, and carried about with every wind of doctrin " through the ſleight of men and cunning craftineſs, whereby they lie " in wait to deceive ;" to pry into myſteries and the hidden counſels of God, and pretend to be " wiſe above what is written," (Col. II. 18.) " intruding into thoſe things which they have not ſeen, vainly " puft up by their fleſhly minds," (1 Tim. I. 7.) " underſtanding " neither what they ſay, nor whereof they affirm."

II. In all theſe inſtances curioſity is evidently as wrong as it may be right in others ; and having conſidered what ſort of love of novelty is to be cenſured and condemned, there is the leſs neceſſity of being particular in ſhowing (as it was propoſed in the ſecond place) the abſurdity of it and inconveniences attending it, in order to cure men of this impertinent ſpirit, that it may never be ſaid of us as it was ſaid of the Athenians, that we " ſpent our time in nothing elſe but either " to tell or to hear ſome new thing."

It is without doubt the mark of a little mind to be ſtruck with every thing that is new, and betrays little knowlege and acquaintance with the world (1). *Nil admirari*, to admire and wonder at nothing is almoſt the one and only thing that can make and keep a man happy. And the greater are mens parts and capacities, and the greater their knowlege and experience in every kind, the leſs apt are they to be ſur-

(1) Nil admirari prope res eſt una, Numici,
Solaque quæ poſſit facere et ſervare beatum. HOR.

priſed

priſed at any thing, and thoſe things are ordinary in their eyes which appear altogether extraordinary to others. Children, and men who think like children, are pleaſed with every new ſight, and fond of every new thing. The more a man hath of Solomon's wiſdom, the more he will approve of Solomon's concluſion, (Eccleſ. I. 9.) that "there is no new thing under the ſun." All that is done now, was done before, and will be done again. The ſame parts are acted on this ſtage of the world, only the actors are changed. The covetous are ſaving, the prodigal are ſpending, the amorous are intriguing, the ambitious are plotting and caballing, and ſo they were from the beginning and ſo they will be to the end. There is nothing new, and therefore be ſurpriſed at nothing.—It may be that this affection for novelty, or rather affectation of novelty, is founded likewiſe in *vanity*, a pride in men to be taken notice of, and to diſtinguiſh themſelves by ſomething ſingular, when perhaps they are incapable of diſtinguiſhing themſelves any other way.—Or poſſibly it proceeds from *levity* and *ficklenes* of mind, for ſome men are of ſuch uncertain natures that they cannot be pleaſed long with the ſame perſons or the ſame things, but are ever hunting after novelty and variety. They are always in chace after happineſs, but follow ſo many different ſents and ſtart ſuch diverſity of game that they catch none. They no ſooner commence an intimacy than they begin to grow weary of it, and are continually courting new acquaintance. They are ſo volatile that they cannot keep their thoughts ſteddy nor fix long upon a ſubject, but ramble from book to book and from one ſtudy to another, and in them is fulfilled the character of Reuben, (Gen. XLIX. 4.) "Unſtable as water "thou ſhalt not excell."—Or poſſibly it proceeds from an *uneaſy diſcontented* temper, for reſtleſs ſpirits, who cannot be eaſy at home, naturally look abroad, and weary of themſelves and weary of their condition ſeek relief in new objects, new diverſions, new company, as men in a fever are conſtantly turning from ſide to ſide, and change from one poſture to another.

But what increaſes the evil is, that this love of novelty is not to be cured by novelty. Their "eye" may in the ſtricteſt ſenſe be ſaid,

(Eccleſ.

(Eccleſ. I. 8.) " not" to be " ſatisfied with ſeeing, nor" their " ear " filled with hearing." It is really an inſatiable appetite; and no ſooner have they obtained the thing that they wiſhed, but it ceaſes to be new, and they wiſh for ſomething more.—It is beſides commonly attended with great expenſe, inhances the price of things not for their real value and intrinſic worth and uſefulneſs, but for their rarity and that imaginary value which the curious and luxurious ſet upon them.—It is likewiſe commonly attended with injuſtice, induces many men to mind the buſineſs and concerns of others to the neglect and detriment and ruin of their own, is at leaſt a breach of civility and good manners, and doing unto others as we would by no means that they ſhould do unto ourſelves.—Moreover it is hurtful to ſtates and communities as well as to ſingle perſons, erects private men into politicians and cenſors of public affairs; renders people diſobedient to government and deſirous of new changes and revolutions; encourages foreign trade and manufactures to the prejudice of our own; exports our treaſure and imports commodities the want whereof would be better than the ſupply; and is a diſmal ſign that a nation, howſoever learned and polite, is declining in arts and ſciences, and patriotiſm and virtue, as the Athenians were, when this ſpirit prevailed moſt among them.

But its influence is the moſt pernicious and its effects the moſt fatal in religion. The Athenians, who were poſſeſſed with this ſpirit, were not the moſt ready to receive and embrace the goſpel. Though St. Paul himſelf preached the word at Athens, yet his ſucceſs there was not near ſo great as in other places. (ver. 32, 33.) " Some mocked, " and others ſaid, We will hear thee again of this matter. So Paul " departed from among them." It is not a truly Chriſtian ſpirit: and you will find it if not to be the principal cauſe yet at leaſt a principal ingredient in all the hereſies and ſchiſms which have diſturbed the peace of the Chriſtian world. Religion is not the worſe but the better for being old; (Heb. XIII. 8.) " Jeſus Chriſt the ſame yeſterday and " to day and for ever;" and that Church, which in doctrin and worſhip approacheth neareſt to the primitive form and ſtandard, is certainly the trueſt and beſt: but it is the fault of human curioſity that it

it cannot reſt ſatisfied with the divine ſimplicity of the goſpel; and ever and anon there are ſome or others ſtarting up under new ſects and denominations, uſing a new cant and jargon of their own, inventing new interpretations, teaching new doctrins, ſuperadding new precepts, affecting new modes of righteouſneſs, pretending to new viſions and inſpirations, and boaſting of uncommon ſanctity and extraordinary communications and gifts of the holy Ghoſt without any evidences or credentials but their own confident aſſertions. Others, who are not of this wild enthuſiaſtic turn, are of a ſour phlegmatic temper, are continually finding fault with eſtabliſhments, and propoſing changes and alterations, exploding old forms, ſubſtituting new liturgies, new articles, new creeds, or rather no articles, no creeds, no religion at all. But all ſuch innovators and innovations are beſt diſmiſſed in the words of the prophet Jeremiah, (Jer. VI. 16.) "Thus ſaith the Lord, Stand "ye in the ways and ſee and aſk for the good old paths, where is the "good way, and walk therein, and ye ſhall find reſt for your ſouls."

Wherefore to conclude, (Heb. XIII. 9.) "Be not carried about with "divers and ſtrange doctrins." It is diſobedience to the church. It is undutifulneſs to the government. It is the ſin of ſchiſm without any reaſonable pretence for it. Frequent your own churches, attend to your own paſtors. You will hear from any of them better things than any of you will practiſe, Make no needleſs diviſions and innovations. (1 Theſſ. IV. 11.) "Study to be quiet and to do your own buſineſs." Let it be your firſt care to know yourſelf, for that is of greater conſequence than to know all the world. If you are deſirous of newneſs of life, put away your old ſins, and become (Gal. VI. 15.) "a new creature in Chriſt "Jeſus." And then if you are for extending your views farther, and delight in ſubjects which are always wonderful always new, contemplate the Supreme Being in his word and in his works, ſtudy ſcripture, ſtudy nature, and you will find enough to exerciſe your curioſity to all eternity. (Rom. XI. 33.) "O the depth of the riches both of the wiſdom "and knowlege of God! how unſearchable are his judgments and his "ways paſt finding out!" (Eccluſ. XLIII. 27.) "We may ſpeak much "and yet come ſhort, wherefore in ſum he is all."

DIS-

DISSERTATION XLII.

Againſt running in Debt.

IT is the method of St. Paul in moſt of his epiſtles, firſt to diſcuſs ſome points of faith, and then in the concluſion to dictate ſeveral rules of practice. This method is obſerved particularly in his Epiſtle to the Romans, in the firſt eleven chapters whereof he treateth at large of the privileges and advantages of the goſpel above the law of Moſes, and in the five remaining chapters recommends the moſt ſhining and exemplary morals to Chriſtians. In the XIIIth chapter he preſſeth the duties of ſubjects to magiſtrates, of inferior perſons to the ſuperior powers, to which he ſubjoins another excellent rule of civil and ſocial life, (ver. 8.) " Owe no man any thing but to love one another." *Owe no man any thing*; avoid running in debt as much as you poſſibly can; you who are clear, keep clear; and thoſe who are under obligations, let them take the firſt opportunity to diſcharge them. And this precept was ſurely very ſeaſonable in an age and in a nation, where general luxury had introduced general extravagance, and extravagance had created neceſſity and dependence; and we fear therefore is no leſs proper and ſeaſonable in theſe times than it was in the days of the apoſtle. But ſtill there is a debt, that we ſhall always owe, and no receipts can ever totally acquit us, and that is love one to another. *Owe no man any thing but to love one another.* Love is the principal duty and diſtinguiſhing characteriſtic of a Chriſtian; and we ſhall be the better enabled to diſcharge this debt, the clearer we ſtand of all others. Both parts of the precept are therefore well joined together. For nothing is uſually a greater interruption to friendſhip, than being indebted and required to pay; men will differ about their money-affairs, yet agree very well in any thing elſe; and it is even grown

proverbial, that the ſhorteſt reckonings make the longeſt friends. Wherefore "owe no man any thing but to love one another:" and is not the ſyſtem of Chriſtianity to be highly admired, that conſults our temporal as well as our ſpiritual welfare; and not only inſtructs us in the ſublimer truths of religion, but alſo promotes the peace and happineſs of mankind in the common affairs of life? Let us then conſider the precept more diſtinctly in both its branches, the prohibition of *owing* and injunction of *loving*, and ſhow the inconveniences of all other debts, and the eternal obligations of the debt of love.

I. The prohibition of owing—*Owe no man any thing*—is not deſigned to leſſen the intercourſe and exchange of good offices between man and man. Chriſtianity would rather promote and encourage mutual kindneſſes and obligations, than any ways obſtruct or reſtrain them; and he muſt be a wonderfully happy or wonderfully unhappy man, who is indebted and obliged to no man for any thing. Neither doth the prohibition extend to all debts of money whatſoever without diſtinction; for there is no receiving or diſburſing of ready caſh for every thing; there muſt neceſſarily be ſome truſt and confidence among men; it may happen ſometimes, that the wealthieſt perſons may have occaſion to borrow of their neighbours; and trade and commerce cannot be carried on without debtor and creditor. All that the prohibition would hinder is living above our fortune and circumſtances, and running in debt more than we can eaſily and certainly pay. For ſurely there is great *indignity* and *meanneſs* in running thus in debt; and a generous ſpirit cannot ſubmit to it without pain and reluctance. It is indeed difficult to want, but is it not almoſt as difficult to borrow? and are not men uſually at a loſs whom to apply to upon the occaſion, and how to apply to him, aſhamed to aſk and afraid to be denied, and often proteſt and promiſe more than they are ever able to perform? When too the time of payment approaches, they find it perhaps more difficult to pay, than it was to borrow; and there is even greater *indignity* and *meanneſs* in not doing the one, than in doing the other. What fear and dread of the day of payment? How quickly all the intermediate time paſſeth away? What anxiety and expedients to procure

a ſupply ſomewhere or other? and how do they begin then to repent, when it is too late, of all their vanity and extravagance? How many apologies and ſtudied excuſes for their want of punctuality? how many ſubterfuges and evaſions to get rid of the importunity of a dun, and to put off the evil day of account a little longer? how often are they forced to abſcond and lurk in ſecret places, are aſhamed to look a friend in the face, and of all friends thoſe eſpecially to whom they are moſt indebted and moſt obliged? The *indignity* and *meanneſs* will tincture their whole behaviour. A man involved in debt appears little and inſignificant in the eyes of the world. He cannot look with that openneſs and erection of countenance, He cannot ſpeak or act with that dignity and freedom as another man. He feeleth himſelf degraded, ſunk, and fallen; and He who might have lived with credit and reputation is reduced at laſt by his debts, perhaps to fly his native country, or perhaps to finiſh his days in priſon. And rather than ſubmit to all this indignity and meanneſs what man of any ſpirit or ingenuity would not be ſure to live within the limits of his fortune; and be content with a little of his own rather than ſhine in all the borrowed feathers of others. Who would not prefer a morſel of bread with freedom to the higheſt living with the loweſt dependency? For as Solomon obſerves, (Prov. XXII. 7.) "the rich ruleth over the poor, and the bor-" rower is ſervant to the lender." As long as I am able to pay for what I have, I am my own maſter; but when I take up more than I can pay, I become another's ſlave.

But there is not only great *indignity* and *meanneſs* in running thus in debt, but likewiſe great *immorality* and *injuſtice*; and it is doing unto others as a man would by no means that others ſhould do unto him. A man who borrows and expends more than he can ever pay is really no better than a robber in maſk and diſguiſe. He liveth as much upon the public, and defrauds as much only in a civiler way. Thoſe alſo who can pay and wont pay are infinitely worſe than theſe who would perhaps if they could. Some perſons, I know not why, take an ill-natured delight in making trading and inferior people come after them ſeveral times, appointing them day after day, before they can find in their

heart to ſatisfy them; they think it not enough to be ſerved, but they muſt likewiſe be frequently attended by them. But St. James (V. 4.) ſpeaketh very ſeverely of ſuch perſons as were guilty in this kind; "Behold the hire of the laborers, who have reaped down your fields, "which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of them "who have reaped are entred into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." If it be done purpoſely, it is cruel and inhuman; if undeſignedly, it is raſh and fooliſh: and you ſhould conſider with yourſelf, that the loſs of ſo much time and attendence is ſomething to them, though perhaps it may be nothing to you; though the matter may be perfectly indifferent on one ſide, yet the diſappointment may occaſion infinite trouble and vexation on the other. Indeed you can properly call nothing your own, but what remains after all your debts are paid, and whatever you expend beſides you have no right and title to; it is not your own, but another's. Men running thus in debt are injurious to their families as well as to their creditors, and are neither juſt to their anceſtors nor to their poſterity. For no man ſhould diminiſh his paternal eſtate, but rather improve it, and like a faithful ſteward to God and his family deliver it down in a better condition than he received it.

It is not only injurious to their own families in particular, but to all mankind in general. It deſtroys faith and credit among men; and for one diſhoneſt man many honeſt men are ſuſpected and diſtruſted; for (Eccluſ. XXIX. 27.) "many have refuſed to lend for other mens "ill dealing, fearing to be defrauded." It inhances the price and value of every thing, and thoſe who pay are forced to pay double and treble to ſupply the deficiencies of thoſe who do not pay at all. It occaſions continual quarrels and animoſities; for if their friend refuſe to lend, they are offended; and if he require his own again, then too they are offended; and we ſhall rarely know a debtor to love, but almoſt always to fear or hate his creditors. As the wiſe man ſays (ver. 5, 6.) "Till he hath received, he will kiſs a man's hand, and for his "neighbour's money he will ſpeak ſubmiſſively; but when he ſhould "repay, he will prolong the time, and return words of grief; he "payeth him with curſings and railings, and for honor he will pay

"him

" him diſgrace." It is no leſs prejudicial and ruinous to public ſocieties, than to ſingle perſons and private families. For men in debt are ripe for any enterpriſes, they muſt be glad of all changes and revolutions, and are ready to ſell their conſcience and their country to the beſt bidder. The Romans were very ſenſible of this, to whom St. Paul addreſſes his epiſtle, they knew by long experience that public virtue depended very much upon private independency, that Curio in opulence was quite a different man from Curio in debt; the immenſe ſums which he owed made him ſell himſelf to Cæſar, and from an advocate of liberty become an abetter and inſtrument of tyranny. Who were the chief (1) aſſociates of Cataline in that wicked conſpiracy ſo famous in hiſtory, but men who had waſted their own fortunes and were greatly indebted to others? and what was Cataline himſelf but a man overwhelmed in debt, greedy of others wealth and profuſe of his own? It is the more provoking, and the greater aggravation of the crime, as it is ſeldom mens real wants and neceſſities, but their vices and vanities which involve them in debts and difficulties; and where one man is undone by his misfortunes, twenty are ruined by their own fault.

Is there not then very good reaſon for the prohibition, " Owe no " man any thing?" Let nothing tempt you to exceed your income and to ſpend more than you can really afford. Think it a leſs ſhame to want than to run in debt; and rather be without a thing, than obtain it by any diſhoneſt or diſhonorable means. Think it a greater honor to pay every one his own, than to wear the fineſt dreſs or appear in the gayeſt equipage that remains yet to be accounted for. The beſt thing is not to borrow or run in debt, and the next beſt is to pay as ſoon as ever you can, and let no man come twice for his money. Be punctual always to your time, for it is a moſt excellent quality; and though ſome men regard it as a light thing, yet it is a very eſſential virtue, and there can be no honor nor honeſty without it. As the ſon of Sirach ſays, (Eccluſ. IV. 31. XXIX. 2, 3.) " Let not thine

(1) Quicumque bona patria laceraverat quique alienum æs grande conflaverat. Alieni appetens, ſui profuſus. Salluſt.

" hand

" hand be ſtretched out to receive, and ſhut when thou ſhouldſt re-
" pay. Lend to thy neighbour in time of his need, and pay thou
" thy neighbour again in due ſeaſon; Keep thy word and deal faith-
" fully with him, and thou ſhalt always find the thing that is neceſ-
" ſary for thee."

II. But there is an injunction of *loving* as well as a prohibition of *owing*; and in this ſenſe we ſhall always be debtors; and having ſhown the inconveniences of all other debts, we now proceed to ſhow the eternal obligations of the debt of love.

We are obliged to it as we are *men*, and it is a debt even to nature. For ſome degree of tenderneſs and compaſſion is wrought into our very frame and conſtitution, and is ſo agreeable to our nature, that we call it *humanity* and *good-nature*; and the contrary temper we call *inhumanity* as if it diveſted us of manhood, and *ill-nature* as being a depravation and corruption of nature. A man of humanity cannot help being moved at the relation only of ſome great diſtreſs; and we are much more deeply affected, when we ourſelves are eye-witneſſes of it; our eyes pay their tribute of tears, our bowels yearn, our hearts melt and ſink within us; and we muſt be hard-hearted monſters to reſiſt all the feelings and inclinations of nature, or ſtupid wretches indeed not to be ſenſible of theſe tender impreſſions. And why hath nature formed us with theſe ſympathies and affections, but that we might be the more incited to do good, not only as our duty but for the very pleaſure that attends it. Sweetneſs to the palate, fragrancy to the ſmell, muſic to the hearing, beauty to the ſight is not more pleaſing and amiable than generous and charitable actions to the mind. To relieve another is really an act of kindneſs to ourſelves: it is ſome comfort and ſatisfaction only to have deſigned a generous thing; but when we have put it in execution, how are we pleaſed and delighted with ourſelves! What inward complacence and tranſport of heart do we feel! what flow of ſpirits! and what harmony of ſoul! The good we enjoy is even greater than we beſtow, and we find experimentally the truth of that ſaying of our Saviour, mentioned by St. Paul, (Acts XX. 35.) " It is more bleſſed to give than to receive."

We

We are likewiſe obliged to love one another as we are *ſocial* creatures; and the circumſtances of mankind require it of us, and the conſtitution of the world as well as our own. For no man is made perfect and all-ſufficient for his own happineſs. We depend continually one upon another for the comforts and conveniences of life. Thoſe who are the moſt accompliſhed in ſome reſpects may yet be very deficient in others; and thoſe of inferior degree and meaner attainments may yet be ſerviceable to the world in one capacity or other. (1 Cor. XII. 21, &c.) " The eye cannot ſay to the hand I " have no need of thee, nor again the head to the feet I have no need " of you; nay much more thoſe members of the body which ſeem " to be more feeble are neceſſary." And why hath " God" thus " tempered the body together," but " that," as the apoſtle ſaith, " there ſhould be no ſchiſm in the body, and the members ſhould " have the ſame care one for another." The reaſon of God's thus dividing his talents ſeverally to every man is that we might thereby be convinced of the abſolute neceſſity of ſociety and dependence upon one another; and the bond of all ſociety is mutual love, friendſhip and charity. And as different men are diſtinguiſhed by their different talents, ſo likewiſe are different countries by their different productions, that there might be a circulation of benefits, and correſpondence and commerce might be maintained among them. Bands of robbers and pirates cannot ſubſiſt, nor hold together without ſome affection and fidelity to each other. (Mark III. 24, 25.) " A king- " dom cannot ſtand" no nor a " houſe, if it be divided againſt it- " ſelf." Love therefore is a debt that we owe to ſociety, and the greater advantages any one enjoys in the community, the more is he obliged to conſult and promote its welfare.

We are farther obliged to it in *common equity*, and we owe it unto others as we ourſelves ſhould expect it from others. For no doubt you are very deſirous, and think it moſt highly reaſonable, that all men ſhould behave towards you with humanity and civility, with good-nature and good manners; that they ſhould be tender of your life and health, and what perhaps you value as much as life and health, your honor

honor and reputation; that they ſhould uſe you with fairneſs and honeſty, with punctuality and exactneſs in all their dealings and commerce with you; that upon occaſion they ſhould be ready to relieve and aſſiſt you; that in caſe of any failure or miſtake they ſhould not be ſevere to mark what is done amiſs and triumph over you, but ſhould endevor to ſet you right in the ſpirit of meekneſs, and be willing to forgive and forget any former offenſes upon your ſubmiſſion and deſire of reconciliation: and if you think it reaſonable for all men to behave thus towards you, muſt not you think it equally reaſonable for you to behave thus towards all men? and when you ſhall act otherwiſe, muſt you not neceſſarily be condemned by the judgment of your own mind? There is the ſame human nature in another man that is in you; and the greateſt may ſay of the meaneſt in the words of Job; (XXXI. 15.) "Did not he, that made me in the womb, "make him? and did not one faſhion us?" Whatever other differences ſubſiſt among men, ſtill there is no difference as to the rule, "Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf." Man is to man a kind of another ſelf; and "not to deal his bread to the hungry and co-"ver the naked" is by an elegant phraſe of Iſaiah (LVIII. 7.) "to "hide himſelf from his own fleſh."

Moreover it is a debt unto *God*, and we are obliged to it in obedience to the divine will and in imitation of the divine nature. Our duty and gratitude to God require us to employ the talents, which he hath given us, for the benefit and advantage of mankind; for our goodneſs extendeth not to God, and we have no other way of being ſerviceable to him, or making any ſuitable return for all the bleſſings of life, but by communicating of the good things we enjoy to our fellow-creatures: and whoever oppreſſeth or deſpiſeth any man may very properly be ſaid in the language of Solomon (Prov. XIV. 31.) "to reproach "his maker." If there was no divine revelation, yet the voice of reaſon, and the whole frame of nature, every thing without us and every thing within us loudly proclaim this to be one of the primary and fundamental laws: and God who is himſelf all love and goodneſs cannot but be pleaſed with thoſe of his creatures, who ſhall endevor to copy after

after him in theſe amiable perfections. Nothing certainly can be a greater honor and advancement to human nature, than to imitate and reſemble the divine, (Luke VI. 36.) to "be merciful as our Father alſo "is merciful;" (Matt. V. 48.) "to be perfect even as our Father who "is in heaven is perfect." (1 John IV. 16.) "God is love and he "that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."

We are ſtill more particularly obliged to it as we are *Chriſtians*, and our holy religion hath carried the arguments and motives to univerſal love and charity higher than ever they were carried by any ſyſtem of morality or religion in the world. For we are not only obliged to it by the ties of common humanity, as we are men, and partakers of the ſame human nature, and perhaps members of the ſame body politic; but we are farther to look upon ourſelves as brethren in a more eminent and peculiar manner, being all the children of God in Chriſt, all partakers of the ſame bleſſed ſpirit, all heirs of the ſame eternal inheritance, all members of the ſame ſpiritual body in Chriſt Jeſus; and (1 Cor. XII. 26.) "whether one member ſuffer, all the members ſuffer with "it, or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." We are not only obliged to it by the general example of God's love and goodneſs manifeſted in the works of creation, preſervation, and providence; but we have likewiſe a more particular example in the ſingular love of God and of Chriſt diſcovered in the redemption and reſtoration of loſt mankind to everlaſting happineſs. For (1 John IV. 10, 11.) "herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us "and ſent his Son to be the propitiation for our ſins; and beloved if "God ſo loved us we ought alſo to love one another." (III. 16.) "Hereby perceive we the love of God, becauſe he laid down his life "for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." We are not only obliged to it by the will and command of God collected from the nature of things, and from the nature of man, and from the nature and attributes of God; but it is moreover the expreſs law and command of God preſſed and inculcated with the greateſt plainneſs and emphaſis in almoſt every page of the goſpel; and it is made the diſtinguiſhing mark and criterion of a true Chriſtian; for "by this"

ſays our bleſſed Saviour (John XIII. 35.) " ſhall all men know that ye " are my diſciples, if ye have love one for another." It is therefore called by the apoſtle (1 Tim. I. 5.) " the end of the commandment," (Rom. XIII. 10.) " the fulfilling of the law," (Col. III. 14.) " the bond " of perfectneſs :" and all other excellences and pretences to religion whatever are vain without it, for (1 Cor. XIII. 1, 2.) " though I ſpeak " with the tongues of men and of angels, and though I have all faith, " ſo that I could remove mountains and have no charity, I am no- " thing." Through the merits of Chriſt it will atone for leſſer offenſes, will (1 Pet. IV. 8.) " cover the multitude of ſins :" and in the next world the principal inquiry will be what works of mercy and charity we have done to our brethren, and our Saviour promiſes to reward them as done to himſelf; for (Matt. XXV. 40.) " verily I ſay " unto you, In as much as ye have done it unto the leaſt of theſe my " brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Wherefore " owe no man any thing but to love one another." Avoid the former, that you may be the better able to perform the latter; for a man involved in debt can have little or nothing to beſtow in charity. Be generous, but be generous of what is your own. Charity is a moſt divine quality, but there can be no true charity without juſtice. Firſt do juſtice, and then ſhow mercy. The one is not ſufficient without the other: (Mic. VI. 8.) " He hath ſhowed thee O man " what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do " juſtly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?" It is a very ſhort, but very complete character of a bad and a good man, that is given by the royal pſalmiſt, and with that I will conclude, (Pſal. XXXVII. 21.) " The wicked borroweth and payeth not again, " but the righteous ſhoweth mercy and giveth."

DIS-

DISSERTATION XLIII.

St. PAUL's Deſcription of Charity.

IN the XIIIth Chapter of St. Paul's 1ſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians we have the fineſt deſcription of Charity that was ever drawn by the pen of man, or even by the Holy Ghoſt himſelf. The Corinthians, to whom this Epiſtle was addreſſed, were divided it ſeemeth into ſects and parties, on account of their ſpiritual gifts which were the beſt and whoſe ſhould have the precedence; and this vain rivalſhip and competition of theirs had occaſioned no little diſorder and confuſion in the church. To remedy this diſorder the apoſtle applies ſeveral perſuaſive arguments in the foregoing chapter; and in the concluſion of it he acquaints them, that he will ſhow unto them "a "more excellent way" than this contending for ſuperiority of gifts, "You covet earneſtly the beſt gifts," ſaith he, "and yet ſhow I un- "to you a more excellent way:" and this more excellent way we find by the words immediately following is "Charity" or more properly *univerſal love and benevolence*, for which there is ſcarce any one adequate word in any language.

He preferreth it to the tongues of men and of angels, and he ſpeaketh with more than the tongues of men and of angels to recommend and adorn it. (ver. 1.) "Though I ſpeak with the tongues of "men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as ſound- "ing braſs or a tinkling cymbal." Eloquence without good ſenſe is nothing better than an empty ſound. Eloquence may excite applauſe and admiration; but without benevolence without goodneſs it can never acquire love and eſteem. It only renders a man ſo much the more formidable and dangerous.

Nay not only eloquence, but what is much better the greateſt degree of knowlege, and even faith ſo as to work miracles without charity are nothing worth. (ver. 2.) " And though I have the gift of " prophecy, and underſtand all myſteries and all knowlege, and " though I have all faith, ſo that I could remove mountains, and " have not charity, I am nothing." Theſe extraordinary gifts and indowments, if accompanied with ill nature and malevolence, will only increaſe a man's guilt, and add tenfold to his condemnation. Knowlege ſhould ſoften and refine our manners, faith ſhould make us better men as well as better chriſtians; but if they produce the contrary effect, we had better live and die in ignorance and unbelief. The devil hath all the natural abilities and perfections of an arch-angel, but yet remains a devil ſtill, and is the moſt hated and deteſted being in the univerſe, becauſe the moſt hateful and deſtructive.

Nay what is better than all knowlege, the greateſt acts of liberality and bounty to the poor, and the ſtrongeſt proof of faith, the ſuffering of martyrdom for our religion, will avail us nothing without charity. (ver. 3.) " And though I beſtow all my goods to feed the poor, " and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it " profiteth me nothing." Indeed *charity* in the vulgar uſe and acceptation of the word denotes alms-giving; and alms-giving if rightly performed is no doubt one principal branch of charity. But the word αγαπη in ſcripture never once that I know of ſignifies that particular branch of charity, *alms-giving*; but always ſignifies *love* or *charity* in general: and in this place the apoſtle manifeſtly diſtinguiſheth alms-giving from charity, and ſuppoſeth that a man may ſpend all his ſubſtance in the one, and yet be wholly deſtitute of the other. If we relieve the poor out of any bad principle or for any bad end, if like the Phariſees (Matt. VI. 2.) we " ſound a trumpet" before us when we do our alms, that we may " have glory of men;" then is our alms-giving properly no charity, is ſo far from being a virtue that it is a fault, and whatever reward we may have for it from men, we ſhall have none at all from " our Father which is in heaven."

Charity,

Charity, the ſcripture charity, is not ſo much the outward act, as the inward habit and diſpoſition of mind. It is a vital active principle, poſſeſſes and animates the whole man, inſpires all his thoughts, breathes in all his words, lives in all his actions. It comprehends more, as I before obſerved, than we can well expreſs in any one word, and therefore we are obliged to make uſe of ſeveral, love, charity, gentleneſs, kindneſs, goodneſs of nature, ſweetneſs of temper, benevolence and beneficence to the whole creation. But we ſhall judge the better of it by taking a diſtinct view of the ſeveral parts of the deſcription.

" Charity ſuffereth long." (ver. 4.) It is the character of God in ſcripture (2 Pet. III. 9.) to be " long-ſuffering to us-ward, not will-" ing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance;" and charity herein imitates and reſembles the divine nature; is " ſlow " to wrath," as St. James ſpeaketh (I. 19.); is not apt to kindle into paſſion and anger; is patient of contradiction; beareth with provocation after provocation, with injury after injury; and forgiveth a brother " not only (Matt. XVIII. 22.) until ſeven times, but until ſeventy " times ſeven."

Charity not only ſuffereth long, but " is kind;" not only is ſlow in taking offenſe, but ſtudiouſly avoids giving any; not only not renders evil for evil, but overcomes evil with good; is not kind by fits and ſtarts, at certain ſeaſons and to certain perſons only, but is kind abſolutely, at all times and to all perſons; is not kind out of intereſt and in hopes of a return, but is kind out of kindneſs, and doeth good for the love of doing good; ſtayeth not to be ſollicited and teaſed into doing a favor, but often prevents the wiſhes and deſires of others, and affords relief before they can aſk it; thinketh it not enough never to do any hurt, but muſt continually be doing ſome good; and is ſo far from making any one uneaſy, that it contributes its utmoſt to make mankind univerſally happy.

" Charity envieth not;" is never diſturbed, never repines at the ſuperior accompliſhments and advantages of others in any kind; but on the contrary giveth honor to whom honor is due, and eſteems the bleſſings of

others

others in a manner its own bleſſings; and by theſe means doubles the pleaſures of life, rejoicing continually with them that rejoice.

" Charity vaunteth not itſelf;" the word in the original, ου περπερευεται, is of doubtful and uncertain ſignification, but commentators generally expound it, that as charity " envieth not" others abilities, ſo neither will it ſuffer us to be oſtentatious of our own; that it is not forward and aſſuming; that it is not for meddling with things above one's ſphere and capacity, but maketh a man able to ſay with the good pſalmiſt (CXXXI. 1, &c.) " Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor " mine eyes lofty, neither do I exerciſe myſelf in great matters or in " things too high for me; ſurely I have behaved and quieted myſelf, " as a child that is weaned of his mother; my ſoul is even as a weaned " child."

" Is not puffed up;" as it maketh no pretenſions to what it hath not, ſo neither is it proud of what it really hath; is not ſwelled and blown up with ſucceſs and applauſe; corrects all that vanity by which we are apt to be full of ourſelves and regardleſs of others, to lean too much to our own underſtanding and deſpiſe the opinion and advice of others; extinguiſheth every ſpark of ſelf-conceit, and ſuffereth us " not to think of ourſelves more highly than we ought to think," (Rom. XII. 3.) but teacheth us " to think ſoberly."

" Doth not behave itſelf unſeemly;" (ver. 5.) this is no more than a conſequence of the former, for all haughtineſs and inſolence of carriage proceed from vanity and fulneſs of heart; and as charity hath no pride inwardly, ſo it betrays none outwardly in look or word or action; is never guilty of any indecency or ill manners; never for the ſake of ſaying ſomething ſmart ſaith any thing rude or offenſive; hath a natural grace and amiableneſs in behaviour, to ſuperiors is very reſpectful, very complaiſant to equals, to inferiors very obliging, treateth all mankind with civility, and is all that really and at the bottom which good breeding is artificially and in appearance. For as a late excellent (1) author obſerves, " if we examin thorowly the idea of what we call " good breeding, we ſhall find it to be nothing elſe, but an imitation

(1) Mr. Addiſon.

" and

" and mimicry of good nature, or in other terms, affability complai-
" ſance and eaſineſs of temper reduced into an art." And indeed what doth the very name of a *Gentleman* imply, but humanity and gentleneſs, good nature and good manners?

" Seeketh not her own;" is above any ſelfiſh views, any perſonal intereſts contrary to the public; looketh not upon a man's ſelf to be born for himſelf, or his own private good to be made the center and circumference of his actions; will not always punctually inſiſt upon its right, will loſe its own in ſome caſes rather than break chriſtian peace, and occaſion any trouble and diſturbance; will " rather take wrong," as St. Paul adviſeth, (1 Cor. VI. 7.) will " rather ſuffer itſelf to be de-
" frauded" in leſſer matters, than " go to law" upon every occaſion; or as our Saviour expreſſeth the ſame ſentiment, (Matt. V. 39, 40.) " Whoſoever ſhall ſmite thee on thy right cheek, will turn to him the
" other alſo, and if any man will ſue thee at the law and take away
" thy coat, will let him have thy cloak alſo."

" Is not eaſily provoked;" or rather as the word ſhould be rendered, " is not highly provoked;" for the character of *not being eaſily provoked* is hardly diſtinguiſhable from the firſt mentioned property of charity, that *it ſuffereth long*; and the original word in this place (ου παροξυνεται) plainly imports, that charity doth not fall into *paroxyſms*, into ſharp and violent fits of paſſion and anger. So that it not only *ſuffereth long*, not only is not *eaſily* provoked; but even when it is provoked, is not provoked *immoderately* and beyond due bounds and limits; it ſeldom indeed diſcovers any emotions of anger, but if upon any juſt occaſion it happens to be angry, it taketh care (Eph. IV. 26.) to " be angry and ſin not, never letteth the ſun go down upon its " wrath," never flieth out into harſh intemperate expreſſions, but maketh (Philip. IV. 5.) its " moderation to be known unto all men."

" Thinketh no evil;" not only formeth no ill deſigns, harbours no malicious thoughts againſt any man, as ſome underſtand the words; but alſo, as others more probably interpret them, ſuſpects evil of no man, putteth the moſt favorable conſtruction upon every thing, and

is ſo far from ſaying ſevere things that it will not give us leave ſo much as to think amiſs of any body, till we are perfectly forced to it.

" Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;" (ver. 6.) as it thinketh no evil itſelf, ſo neither is it pleaſed that others ſhould think evil, unjuſtly of any man; deteſts every thing of ſcandal and defamation, is an enemy to all nameleſs libellers and libels, on the contrary is glad to have falſe reports detected, miſrepreſentations ſet right, and injured innocence vindicated; in any argument, in any controverſy of religious or civil concern is never delighted in hearing law or equity ſcripture or reaſon perverted and abuſed, but on the contrary always loveth to have juſtice diſtributed and right prevail; and as the beloved and loving apoſtle declares of himſelf, (3 John 4.) " hath no " greater joy than to hear that men walk in truth;" is not ſo far partaker in other mens ſins as to take pleaſure in them, but on the contrary delights in the practice of univerſal righteouſneſs, would have men as much as is poſſible live like angels and earth be the image of heaven.

" Beareth all things;" (ver. 7.) by *all things* in this verſe common ſenſe and the common forms of ſpeech will inſtruct us are not meant ſimply all, but only all ſuch as are conſiſtent with the nature and end of charity. " Beareth all things," or rather " covereth all things," throweth a veil over the failings and infirmities of men, and conceals all the evil we know unleſs it be greater charity to reveal it: " believeth all " things," not only *thinketh no evil* as was ſaid before, but is alſo willing to *believe* all the good that it hath any reaſonable ground to believe: " hopeth all things," and even where there is not ſufficient ground to *believe* good of a man, it ſtill forbeareth not to *hope* good of him, and doth not abſolutely deſpair of his amendment: " endureth " all things," beareth with almoſt any thing in this labor of love, and doth not finally give a man over and abandon him to himſelf, till his caſe becomes manifeſtly deſperate and paſt remedy.

Such is St. Paul's deſcription of charity; and we ſee it comprehends almoſt all the moral and ſocial virtues. As the celebrated Mr. Chilling-

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worth (2) remarks, " *It ſuffereth long*, and ſo 'tis longanimity; *it is* " *kind*, and ſo 'tis courteſy; *it vaunteth not itſelf*, and ſo 'tis modeſty; " *it is not puffed up*, and ſo 'tis humility; *it is not eaſily provoked*, " and ſo 'tis lenity; *it thinketh no evil*, and ſo 'tis ſimplicity; *it re-* " *joiceth in the truth*, and ſo 'tis verity; *it beareth all things*, and ſo " 'tis fortitude; *it believeth all things*, and ſo 'tis faith; *it hopeth all* " *things*, and ſo 'tis confidence; *it endureth all things*, and ſo 'tis pa- " tience." And what is the reverſe of all this, but hatred, malevolence, ill-nature, or what elſe can we call it? Ill-nature is impatient and unkind, ill-nature envieth, ill-nature vaunteth itſelf, is puffed up, behaveth itſelf unſeemly, is ſelfiſh, is of violent ſtrong paſſions and deep reſentment, deſigns evil itſelf and ſuſpects evil of others, rejoiceth not in the truth but rejoiceth in falſe defamations, covereth nothing, believeth nothing, hopeth nothing, endureth nothing.

Another ſupereminent perfection of charity ſtill remains to be conſidered. The apoſtle had ſaid before that all ſpiritual gifts, the ſpeaking with tongues, and prophecy, and all knowlege were nothing worth without charity: and here he prefers it on account of its longer duration, for charity will accompany us into the next life, and floriſh to all eternity, whereas theſe other imperfect gifts belonging only to this imperfect ſtate ceaſe together with it. (ver. 8.) " Charity never faileth: " but whether there be prophecies, they ſhall fail; whether there be " tongues, they ſhall ceaſe; whether there be knowlege it ſhall vaniſh " away." Upon which the apoſtle ſomewhat inlargeth, as we ſhall have a fitter opportunity of doing hereafter; and then cloſeth his deſcription with this memorable encomium; (ver. 13.) " And now " abideth faith, hope, charity, theſe three, but the greateſt of theſe " is charity." Nothing greater can be ſaid in recommendation of this virtue, and therefore it is properly reſerved to the laſt place to leave the ſtrongeſt impreſſion on the minds of the Corinthians.

Now charity may be ſaid to be greater than faith or hope, 1ſt becauſe it is of more uſe to a man's ſelf, 2dly becauſe it is more beneficial to others, 3dly becauſe it is of longer duration, and laſtly becauſe it

(2) Serm. 2.

maketh us more like the ſtandard of all perfection, God himſelf. And indeed what can give the præeminence to one quality above others more juſtly than its being the moſt uſeful, the moſt generous, the moſt durable, the moſt godlike and divine?

1. Charity is of more uſe and advantage to a man's ſelf than his faith or hope. For it contributes more to the quiet and repoſe of the mind than either of the other two. A man may have faith and hope in a great degree, and yet be a reſtleſs turbulent creature; "the" very "devils believe," as St. James (II. 19.) informs us, and yet their belief alters not their diabolical nature; but charity huſheth and layeth aſleep all the rougher paſſions, and eſtabliſheth a perfect ſerenity and calm within. Faith and hope are at beſt but the beginnings of a good life, but charity is the end and completion of it. Charity is truly, as the apoſtle calleth it, (1 Tim. I. 5.) "the end of the commandment," (Rom. XIII. 10.) "the fulfilling of the law," and (Col. III. 14.) "the bond of perfectneſs." Beſides its yielding greater comfort and delight to one's own mind, it raiſeth the more lovely idea of one in the minds of others, and ſo tendeth to his greater honor and advantage. A man may be perhaps admired for his faith and hope; but for his good works only, for his charity is he loved. He who ſoweth good things, is moſt likely to reap good things. Thoſe who have it in their power will do well to him; and thoſe who have it not in their power will ſtill wiſh well to him, and (Job XXIX. 29.) "the bleſſings of "him that was ready to periſh will come upon him." Charity is univerſally acknowleged the ſame, and naturally gaineth eſteem and reverence in all ages and countries: but the notion of faith varies with times and climates, and what is magnified as orthodoxy on one ſide of a ſea or mountain, is perſecuted as hereſy on the other. Charity not only doeth a man more ſervice when he is living, but will alſo ſtand him in better ſtead when he ſhall come to die. There is no poſſible inſtance where faith and hope can ſave a man alone without charity; but there may be found an inſtance (for inſtance in a ſtate of invincible ignorance) where charity alone may ſave a man without faith or hope. A man may be deſtitute of faith merely through his misfortune; but

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it muſt altogether be his fault, if he is void of charity: And his faith too will be an aggravation of his want of charity, but his charity may in ſome caſes perhaps be an alleviation of his want of faith. Certain it is that at the day of judgment it will not be ſo much inquired what we have believed as what we have done; and by our words and works chiefly we ſhall be juſtified or condemned.

2. Charity is more beneficial to others as well as of more uſe to a man's ſelf than his faith or hope. A man believeth for himſelf, and hopeth for himſelf; his faith and hope are all for his own ſake: but charity is of a more extenſive generous nature, and in the very notion of it implies doing good to others. Thoſe qualities are ſomewhat like a light in a dark lanthorn, that ſhineth only to him who holdeth it; but charity diffuſeth itſelf like the ſun, and ſcatters light and heat on all around and beneath it. The world may chance to be a gainer by charity without faith; but it will never be the better, and I fear always the worſe for faith without charity. It is ſuch faith as this (faith working not by love) that thunders out her anathemas on all who differ from her, that erects inquiſitions, foments maſſacres and rebellions, and occaſions much effuſion of the blood of Chriſtians by the hands of Chriſtians: but charity maketh men like brethren dwell together in unity, (Col. III. 13.) "forbearing one another, and forgiving one "another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any."

3. Charity is not only of more uſe to a man's ſelf, and more beneficial to others, but is likewiſe of longer duration than faith or hope. Faith and hope are more proper to this world, for in the next world faith in great meaſure will be loſt in viſion, and hope in great meaſure will be ſwallowed up in enjoyment: but charity is not confined to this or that ſtate, and like our ſouls is immortal and endureth for ever. "Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they "ſhall fail; whether there be tongues, they ſhall ceaſe; whether "there be knowlege, it ſhall vaniſh away. For we know in part, and "we propheſy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then "that which is in part ſhall be done away." Faith and hope imply ſomething of want and imperfection, the former a want of ſomething

to be known, the latter a want of ſomething to be enjoyed, and therefore they belong more properly to this imperfect ſtate: but charity accompanies us into the next world, as it is the very temper of happineſs, and we muſt not only be happy with it, but there is no being happy without it. And as faith and hope are proper to this ſtate, ſo in this ſtate too they may be exerciſed to perfection: but charity is infinite in its degrees as well as in its duration; it is continually improving, and is ſtill capable of farther improvement, as the ſea is always filling but never filled.

4. Charity, beſides its being a more uſeful, a more generous, a more durable is alſo a more divine quality than faith or hope, and maketh us more like the ſtandard of all perfection, God himſelf. Men may talk much of divine faith and divine hope, and in a certain ſenſe they are ſo: but it is charity, it is love that properly ſpeaking is divine. Faith and hope have no place in the Supreme Being; for where is perfect knowlege, there is not faith but certainty; and where is perfect happineſs, there is not hope but enjoyment: but the darling attributes of the Deity, the attributes in which he delights are mercy and goodneſs, and in ſcripture language God is not only ſaid to love us, but is more than once (1 John IV. 8 and 16.) ſtiled "love" itſelf. And conſequently let our faith and hope be never ſo great, yet they are not at all godlike; we may indeed ſhow our obedience to God by a proper exerciſe of theſe qualities, but by theſe qualities alone we can never reſemble him: but now in being charitable we not only obey him but imitate him, we not only act according to his will but likewiſe in conformity to his example; we are made (2 Pet. I. 4.) "partakers "of the divine nature," and become, as our Saviour ſpeaketh (Matt. V. 45.) "the children of our Father which is in heaven." We may likewiſe obſerve that the more any beings reſemble God in other perfections, the more they reſemble him too in love and goodneſs. The holy angels, beings much higher and nobler than ourſelves, do yet delight (Heb. I. 14.) "to miniſter to them who ſhall be heirs of ſalva-"tion;" and there is always (Luke XV. 10.) "joy in their preſence "over one ſinner that repenteth." The Son of God, as he is (Heb. I. 3.)

3.) " the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his " perſon," ſo hath he given us the greateſt inſtance of love that can poſſibly be conceived, (1 John III. 16.) " Hereby perceive we the love " of God, becauſe he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay " down our lives for the brethren." The faithful are the children of Abraham, but the charitable are the children of the moſt Higheſt. Our faith and hope may make us perhaps martyrs and confeſſors; but charity raiſeth us ſtill higher, and maketh us as good as angels, as ſaviours, as gods in a manner one to another. Charity muſt needs be the great perfection of the human nature, ſince it is the great perfection of the divine; and it is ſomewhat remarkable, that what in St. Matthew (V. 48.) is *perfect*, " Be ye therefore perfect even as your " Father which is in heaven is perfect," in the parallel place in St. Luke (VI. 36.) is *merciful*, " Be ye therefore merciful as your Father " alſo is merciful."

You muſt be ſenſible by this time what a comprehenſive, and what an excellent virtue Chriſtian Charity is: and certainly much may be ſaid to recommend ſo truly amiable a quality, ſetting aſide the conſideration of its being our duty ſo ſtrictly injoined and ſo frequently inculcated in the goſpel; for doubtleſs it is the beſt way to make a man eaſy in himſelf as well as more agreeable to others, to poſſeſs his own ſoul in peace and harmony as well as gain upon the love and affection of all who know him. A man in the moſt proſperous circumſtances of life can never rightly enjoy himſelf, as long as his mind is not at eaſe; and his mind can never be at eaſe, as long as he is under the dominion of his paſſion, as long as he is peeviſh and ill-natured. Ill-nature galleth and fretteth the ſpirits, and like a vulture within gnaweth upon the very vitals. But the good-natured, good-tempered man hath the faireſt title to inward peace and happineſs, as he is the freeſt from all thoſe jarring paſſions, which render a man's ſelf a burden and torment to himſelf. His mind is ſeldom out of tune. You uſually find him cheerful and eaſy, and there are few things in life which can ruffle and diſturb him. Whatever troubles and ſtorms are raiſed from without, yet generally all is ſerene and calm within.

within. As there is no being eaſy in one's ſelf, ſo there is no being agreeable to others, without a ſweet obliging temper and behaviour. "The ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit," as St. Peter calleth it, (1 Pet. III. 4.) "is" in ſome degree in men as well as in women, and in the eſteem of the world as well as "in the ſight of God, of "great price." A man's power and authority may gain him the outward reſpect and reverence of mankind, but all the power and authority in the world without goodneſs cannot engage their hearts and affections. The generous good tempered benevolent man loveth every body, and juſtly therefore is he by every body beloved.

Much I ſay may be ſaid to recommend this excellent quality upon civil, but ſtill more upon religious conſiderations; much as it is a point of worldly prudence, but ſtill more as it is matter of ſtrict indiſpenſable duty. I know there are ſeveral who look upon good temper as an amiable quality indeed, but as a quality that is born with us; and therefore they trouble not their heads much about it. If they have it, it is happy for them; if they have it not, it is the defect of their nature, and they can no more help it than any natural deformity of body. Now it muſt be admitted, that ſome men are naturally of a better temper than others; but this is no more an argument that all are not obliged to be good-tempered, than it is an argument that all are not obliged to be chaſte and temperate, becauſe ſome men are naturally of warmer conſtitutions, and have larger ſtomachs than other people. The virtue may be more difficult in the one caſe than in the other, but ſtill it is equally our duty; and whatever our natural complexions and conſtitutions may be, we are alike bound to obſerve it. If we have nature on our ſide, our work will be the eaſier; but however it is a neceſſary work, though nature be againſt us. The faults and vices of nature may be corrected and muſt be corrected. To yield to our natural temper will not make our ſin no ſin, but to overcome our natural temper will make our virtue greater virtue; render it more illuſtrious here, and intitle it to a more glorious reward hereafter. Beſides, a man cannot be perfectly good-tempered by the force of nature alone, any more than by the ſtrength of genius

alone

alone he can be a finiſhed author in any kind. Nature may plant, art may water, but religion muſt give the increaſe.

Let not men therefore neglect this great duty, and much leſs let them pretend to deride and deſpiſe it. Good-nature with its kindred virtues, meekneſs mildneſs forbearance forgiveneſs tenderneſs pity and the like, is grown proverbial among ſome ſorts of people for folly and indiſcretion. But the greateſt vulgar errors are often couched in old proverbs. It is ſo far from being a ſign of weakneſs or folly; that on the contrary I believe it will be found true, that wherever is thorough good-nature, there always is there always muſt be thorough good ſenſe. There are men of ſenſe indeed, who yet are not men of temper; but in this at leaſt they do not ſhow their good ſenſe, how much ſoever they may have in other matters. And generally ſpeaking the men of the greateſt underſtanding, the ableſt maſters and performers in every kind, are the moſt remarkable inſtances of candor and humanity. Fools are always wayward and perverſe; and the more you know of their temper, the worſe you like them. Surely to be always cheerful and eaſy, to preſerve a ſerene even temper, neither too much dejected on the one hand, nor too much elated on the other, is wiſdom and the highth of wiſdom. Little minds can reſent an injury, great ones only can forgive and forget. If good-nature be a weakneſs, it is the weakneſs of the moſt elevated ſouls, the weakneſs of the bleſſed angels, and of the divine nature itſelf. For (1 John IV. 16.) "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in "God and God in him."

But can any apology be wanting, or rather is not the higheſt commendation to be beſtowed on this the quinteſſence and perfection of all virtues? Faith and hope are excellent things, but charity is ſtill more excellent. And how unreaſonably then and prepoſterouſly do thoſe men and ſocieties of men act, who contend for articles of faith to the violation of charity, and in order to eſtabliſh the belief of what they call Chriſtianity in the world, ſubvert the very principles of humanity! This is manifeſtly to prefer the leſs to the greater; this is for the ſake of the means to forget the end, and to root up the foundation

dation for the better ſupport of the building. " By this," ſaith our Saviour," (John XIII. 35.) " ſhall all men know that you are my " diſciples if ye have love one for another." Charity is the characteriſtic of our religion, and therefore the principal ſtreſs is to be laid upon charity. (Tit. III. 8.) " This is a faithful ſaying, and theſe things " I will that thou affirm conſtantly, that they which have believed in " God might be careful to maintain good works." All other marks of religion without good works are vain and ineffectual. We do well indeed to believe in the divine promiſes, and to hope for the divine rewards; we do well indeed to frequent the church, to ſay our prayers and receive the bleſſed ſacrament; but notwithſtanding all this religion, if we have " not fed" the hungry, if we have " not " cloathed" the naked, if we have " not viſited" the ſick, our Saviour will ſay unto us, (Matt. XXV. 41, &c.) " Depart from me ye " curſed into everlaſting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." The want of charity will damn us, when all the faith, all the hope in the world will not ſave us.

Let us therefore believe in God, let us hope in God, but above all let us endevor to be like God. The beſt worſhip of God is the imitation of him; the moſt acceptable ſacrifices we can pay to him, " the " ſacrifices with which he is well pleaſed, (Heb. XIII. 16.) are to do " good and to communicate:" And (James I. 27.) " pure religion " and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To viſit the fa- " therleſs and widows in their affliction, and to keep himſelf un- " ſpotted from the world." Faith and hope are good in their kind, but charity is goodneſs itſelf. Nay faith and hope are only ſo far good as they work by love; hope without it is arrogance, and faith without is the faith of devils. (James II. 19, 20.) " Thou believeſt " that there is one God, thou doeſt well; the devils alſo believe and " tremble: But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without " works is dead?" and no works like works of mercy and goodneſs. To theſe are made the moſt glorious promiſes, to the want of theſe are denounced the moſt terrible threatnings in ſcripture. (Matt. V. 7.) " Bleſſed are the merciful, for they ſhall obtain mercy;" but (James

II.

II. 13.) " he ſhall have judgment without mercy that hath ſhowed " no mercy."

Remember this, and ſhow yourſelves Men and Chriſtians. Humanity and kindneſs are our duty as we are Men, and more particularly as we are Chriſtians. The Chriſtian religion is the beſt-natured inſtitution in the world, and Chriſt the moſt perfect pattern of love and charity. This he practiſed living and dying, and this he commands in every page of his goſpel. (Col. III. 12.) " Put on therefore (as the " elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindneſs, hum- " bleneſs of mind, meekneſs, long-ſuffering:" And (Eph. IV. 31, 32.) " Let all bitterneſs, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil- " ſpeaking be put away from you with all malice; And be ye kind " one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God " for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven you."

DISSERTATION XLIV.

On knowing ourſelves.

KNOW thyſelf (1) was a precept in ſuch repute among the Heathen moraliſts, that they aſcribed it to the oracle of the wiſeſt of their gods. And as the ſcattered virtuous ſentiments of the Heathen morality are collected and tranſplanted into Chriſtianity, ſo we ſee this particularly adopted by St. Paul; (2 Cor. XIII. 5.) " Examin yourſelves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own ſelves; " know ye not your own ſelves?"

(1) Γνωθι σεαυτον. Noſce teipſum.
A cœlo deſcendit γνωθι σεαυτον.

Now the knowlege of ourſelves here recommended is not a phyſical knowlege, but a moral; a knowlege not of our mechanical frame and conſtitution, but of our hearts and affections; a knowlege not of what is the bond or cement that uniteth ſoul and body, and formeth their mutual action and paſſion; not what is the ſeat and as one may ſay preſence-chamber of the ſoul, whether in the brain, or in the heart, or diffuſed over the body; not what is the cauſe of memory, what of reflection, what of volition, and of the other powers and faculties of our ſouls: but a knowlege of what are the ſecret ſprings, which ſet us on work, and excite our joys and griefs, our hopes and fears, our deſires and averſions; what is the main ſcope and end that we propoſe to ourſelves in all our thoughts words and actions; what are the diſtinguiſhing characters and properties of our ſouls, in which we differ as much one from another, as in our outward features and the lineaments of our faces.

Such is the knowlege here recommended, and to this purpoſe ſpeaketh (2) one of the beſt and wiſeſt of the heathen philoſophers. 'It is 'the greateſt piece of art with the mind itſelf to ſee the mind; and 'this is the force and meaning of that precept of Apollo, in which 'he adviſeth that every one ſhould know himſelf. For he doth not, 'I ſuppoſe, give this precept, that we ſhould know our limbs or ſta-'ture or figure.' Neither are we bodies, nor do I ſpeaking this ſpeak 'it to thy body. When therefore he ſaith Know thyſelf, he ſaith 'Know thy mind. For the body is as it were the veſſel and recep-'tacle of the mind: whatſoever is done by thy mind, that is done 'by thee.'

This knowlege of ourſelves is the more fit to be made matter of exhortation, becauſe it is ſeldom acquired or indeed purſued, as it deſerves to be purſued. For how many are there who look upon themſelves as ſomething conſiderable, when at the ſame time all the world is

(2) Eſt illud quidem vel maximum animo ipſo animum videre; et nimirum hanc habet vim præceptum Apollinis, quo monet ut ſe quiſque noſcat. Non enim credo id præcipit, ut membra noſtra aut ſtaturam figuramve noſcamus: neque nos corpora ſumus; neque ego tibi dicens hoc corpori tuo

is ſenſible that they are nothing; and with the church of Laodicea in the Revelation (III. 17.) ſay, that "they are rich, and increaſed with "goods, and have need of nothing; and know not that they are "wretched and miſerable and poor and blind and naked?" Few of us are like that noble Roman, who wiſhed for a window to his breaſt, that all might be conſpicuous there. So far are we from deſiring that others ſhould know what paſſeth in our breaſts, that we will hardly give an account of it to ourſelves. Many a man is quickſighted enough to diſcern the "mote" in his "brother's" eye, and yet feeleth nothing of the "beam" in "his own" eye. Many a man valueth himſelf upon his knowlege of men and manners, and yet is ſtrangely ignorant of himſelf and of his own genius and manners. Many a man can talk and harangue profoundly, and give good advice to others who hath never yet learned to diſcourſe and adviſe much with himſelf. And in common life as well as in hiſtory we frequently meet with characters of men, who had a great deal of ſkill and addreſs in managing any affairs but their own.

The truth is, nothing we love more, and yet nothing we leſs like to converſe with than ourſelves. We prize ourſelves above all things, we commend ourſelves, and yet we do not know ourſelves; and becauſe we do not know ourſelves, therefore are we ſo fond and conceited of ourſelves. We have our eyes always without us, our thoughts like huſbands are never at home; and we are ſo buſied in ſurveying the world abroad, that we have little leiſure and leſs inclination to contemplate the little world within. The fitteſt opportunity for laying open our hearts and ſearching them to the bottom is ſolitude and retirement, and yet of all things we dread being alone, and fly from ourſelves, as if we were afraid of ourſelves, to drown ſelf-reflection in the noiſe of impertinent company and more impertinent diverſions.

Even when men are alone, they are ſcarce ever by themſelves. How ſelfiſh ſoever they are in other matters, they are too public-ſpirited to

tuo dico. Cum igitur Noſce te dicit, dicit Noſce animum tuum. Nam corpus quidem quaſi vas eſt aut aliquod animi receptaculum; ab animo tuo quicquid agitur, id agitur ate. Cic. Tuſc. Diſput. I. 22.

ſpend their reflections purely upon themſelves, and in their moſt private retirements think more of what they would be than of what they really are, forming ſchemes for the future, but neglecting the preſent, conſidering how to live but not living properly now, very buſy in imagination, in reality very idle. It is certain, one may trifle away time as much in his cloſet as abroad; and as ſome men are often abſent in company, ſo others are as much abſent and out of themſelves in ſolitude. The envious man is never, the angry man is never by himſelf; for the object of their envy and reſentment is always a party in their conſiderations. The lover is never, the miſer is never with himſelf; for where their treaſure is, there will their heart be alſo. Half of the learning and philoſophy in the world is only a more ſpecious and wordy ſort of ignorance, and an indirect art of keeping us unacquainted with (what it becomes us above all things to be acquainted with) ourſelves.

So little alone are we, when alone; and if we cannot bear ourſelves to exerciſe the critic upon ourſelves, it is not to be expected that we ſhould patiently ſubmit to the criticiſms of others. This is the reaſon why men are ſo generally averſe from receiving advice, for we do not like that others ſhould make more free with us than we do with ourſelves. We are well enough pleaſed with the glaſs that ſhoweth us our face, with the phyſician who informeth us of our habit of body; but who careth to have impartially repreſented to him the ſtate of his own mind, and willingly admits an adviſer in underſtanding and good ſenſe?

Every one muſt be ſenſible from a view of the world and the ways of the world, that there are very few people who really endevor to know themſelves, and even thoſe few who really endevor it meet with ſeveral obſtructions and remoras in the way to it. But theſe obſtructions are not inſuperable, they may be ſurmounted, if the proper courſe be purſued for acquiring this knowlege; and the benefits reſulting from it will be more than a ſufficient compenſation for all the pains taken in the purſuit. There are then three points principally to be conſidered, the difficulties and impediments in the way to ſelf-knowlege, the beſt means of attaining it, and the great advantages attending it.

I. The

I. The difficulties and uſual impediments in the way to ſelf-knowlege. The body often cloudeth and overſhadoweth the mind, and hindereth us from diſcerning it, as it is really in itſelf. Too great an elevation or too great a dejection of ſpirits betrays our reaſon, the one into a ſort of vanity, the other into a ſort of deſpair; in the former caſe we are apt to think more confidently more favorably, in the latter perhaps more ſuſpiciouſly more hardly of ourſelves than we deſerve. A vigorous body and high pulſe are like hot beds in gardening, make our fancies grow wild and luxuriant, and fill us with all the florid ideas as if there was a perfect paradiſe within: On the other ſide when muſing melancholy prevails and the ſpleen hath gotten poſſeſſion of us, they are like untimely froſts, nip our faireſt hopes, and make every thing appear gloomy and dark within and without. What is it that generally maketh the young man ſo ſanguin and opiniative, and the old man ſo deſponding and diffident of himſelf, but the different circulation of the blood, and tide of ſpirits in the one and ebb in the other? How many are ſuperſtitious, how many are enthuſiaſts merely by the force of their natural conſtitution? What numbers of poor creatures are plunged into the depths of melancholy and deſpair, fearing where no fear is, grieving for ſins which they never committed, pronouncing themſelves worthy of puniſhments which they never deſerved? And what is uſually the ſpring and ſource of all this miſery, but the violence of ſome diſeaſe or an ill habit of body?

So difficult is it in many caſes to gain a clear proſpect of the mind through the veil of the body; but the grand obſtacles to knowing the heart are the deceitfulneſs and wickedneſs of the heart itſelf. And in this ſenſe we may apply the words of the prophet, that it is matter of difficulty not only to know another's heart, but alſo to know our own. (Jer. XVII. 9.) "The heart is deceitful above all things, and deſpe-
"rately wicked; who can know it?" for that reaſon "who can know
"it?" A heart without diſguiſe, without paſſion, without vice is tranſparent as the clear fountain, and eaſily ſeen to the bottom: but the "deceitful" the "wicked" heart is "like the troubled ſea (Iſa. LVII.
"20.) when it cannot reſt, whoſe waters caſt up mire and dirt." It

is

is impoſſible to reckon up all the hindrances and impediments to ſelf-knowlege. The diſeaſes of the mind are at leaſt as many as thoſe of the body: Nay ſo deceitful is the heart, that it deceives us with the very number of its deceits. It ſhall be my buſineſs to take notice only of ſuch difficulties, as every man may experience in himſelf, and ſuch I conceive are theſe or moſt of theſe which follow.

1. It is difficult to call off the mind from her attention to the things of ſenſe, and to turn our thoughts inwards upon ourſelves ſo much as is requiſite to make us know ourſelves. Senſation is eaſier than reflection; and many men have the one to great perfection, who ſeem in a manner entire ſtrangers to the other. The ſoul, like the eye, while it ſeeth other things, ſeeth not itſelf; and it requires a great deal of ſkill and application to make it its own object. Our ideas follow one another in quick ſucceſſion, one goeth and another cometh; and not without uſe and practice we become able to keep our thoughts fixed on any one thing long together. And it is not a ſudden glance, a tranſient thought, that will bring us acquainted with our ſouls. We muſt, as I may ſay, turn them on all ſides, and view them in every light: and to do this effectually, and for the time to repel the buſy ſwarm of other ideas, will call for our greateſt art and patience and reſolution. We are not much uſed to theſe abſtract ſpeculations, and no wonder we ſet about them with ſome reluctance. The neceſſities of the back and the belly are ſuch powerful ſollicitreſſes that few men aſpire higher and think how they may improve the head and the heart.

2. It is ſometimes difficult to know what are the great and ruling principles of our lives and actions. Some men have no principles of their own, but think and act and talk by rote, and camelion-like take the tincture from what they touched laſt. Others change their principles ſo often that they might as well have no principles at all; at different times they act by ſuch different meaſures, that it is hard to ſay that this or that prevaileth in them and beareth the greateſt ſway; they are "unſtable as water," and conſtant in nothing but their inconſtancy. Such men may as ſoon account for the changes and viciſſitudes of the wind and the weather, as gain an inſight into themſelves

ſelves or a knowlege of their own principles. Even with the more grave and ſteddy a great deal depends upon a good or an ill humor. To day things have ſucceeded to our wiſh, our hearts are at eaſe, we are in perfect charity with all the world, and aim at every thing that is becoming and beautiful in converſation. To morrow we meet with croſſes and diſappointments, we are angry with all the world, we rail at mankind, and uneaſy to ourſelves are uneaſy to every one about us. Our zeal for religion and our country may perhaps be nothing but a choleric hafty temper; or on the other hand a cold phlegmatic conſtitution may be our only meekneſs and moderation. How often do we meet with contraries at the ſame time in the ſame character? So that the ſame perſon in the ſame action at the ſame inſtant ſhall be fearful and daring, abject and provoking, tyrannical and ſlaviſh, profuſe and covetous, extravagant and yet commending œconomy, perfidious and yet profeſſing ſincerity, a coward to men and a bravoe to God. Nay ſuch artifice is there in mens principles, that many times they are religious out of a principle of irreligion, and becauſe they can get by it and make their godlineſs their gain: many times they do juſt and honeſt things out of mere craft and knavery, and becauſe they can the better impoſe on the world and carry on their ill deſigns: many times they are ſober and temperate out of nothing but covetouſneſs, and becauſe they would ſave charges; they can feaſt high and drink deep at any body's expenſe but their own. They can lie for the truth, and forſwear themſelves for God's ſake; be humble out of pride, and cruel out of charity; infidels out of credulity, and atheiſts out of enthuſiaſm.

3. It is difficult to know whether we ſhall keep our beſt purpoſes and reſolutions. For we are perfect courtiers in making fair promiſes to ourſelves, but poor bankrupts in the performance. When the prophet told Hazael what evil he would do unto the children of Iſrael, how vehemently did he diſclaim it, (2 Kings VIII. 13.) "What is "thy ſervant a dog that he ſhould do this great thing?" How heartily did St. Peter abhor the thoughts of denying Chriſt, (Matt. XXVI. 35.) "Though I ſhould die with thee, yet will I not deny thee?"

And

And yet we know both the one and the other did the things which they ſo paſſionately diſclaimed and abhorred. We can hardly anſwer for ourſelves for the preſent, and much leſs can we inſure ourſelves for the future. Temptations and dangers ſeem leſs at diſtance than when near at hand; and the event too often proveth our confidence to be vain boaſting, our ſtrength to be weakneſs, our wiſdom to be folly. Few peoples reſolutions are ſo well weighed, ſo well formed, ſo well kept, as that of the good pſalmiſt, (Pſal. CXIX. 106.) "I have "ſworn, and am ſtedfaſtly purpoſed to keep thy righteous judgments."

4. It is impoſſible to know ourſelves without trial, and it is difficult to know what is a trial ſufficient. For men may glorioufly withſtand one temptation, and yet fall ſhamefully under another. They may be (3) manly and ſevere enough to deſpiſe pleaſure, and yet be ſoft and effeminate in pain; they may neglect glory, and yet their ſpirits may be broken with diſgrace and infamy. A preſent ſeaſonably made will gain ſome men, who would be ſhocked and offended with a bribe: and ſome who are not to be moved by menaces and complaints, may eaſily be won by flattery and inſinuation. Different temptations prevail over different minds, as all fiſhes are not caught by the ſame bait: and it is the great ſecret to know what is the true teſt and touchſtone of ourſelves. How many are patient enough of adverſe fortune, and yet have their heads turned and are undone by good ſucceſs? as on the reverſe how many are ſkilful pilots in the ſmooth ſea of proſperity, and yet cannot bear up againſt the wind and tide of adverſity? He who maketh an eſtimate of himſelf before he hath had experience of himſelf, acteth even more imprudently than the man in the goſpel, (Luke XIV. 19.) who "firſt bought" his five yoke of oxen, and "then" went to "prove" them; as much more imprudently as a man's ſelf is of greater value than many oxen. It is to be feared that moſt people's virtue conſiſts in their having never been ſufficiently tried: and our bleſſed Saviour knowing what is in man, knowing the weakneſs and infirmity of human nature, hath therefore taught us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation."

(3) Voluptatem ſeveriſſimè-contemnant, in dolore ſint molliores; gloriam negligant, frangantur infamia. Cic. Off. I. 4.

5. It

5. It is difficult to know ourſelves becauſe in taking up a form to deceive others we often effectually deceive ourſelves. Every one loveth to ſet the beſt ſide outward; we ſtudy appearances more than realities; and few of us dare to aſk ourſelves "Am I the man I ſeem and would "be thought, or deceiving others do I not alſo deceive myſelf?" It is certain that we may act a part ſo long, that in the end we may think it natural to us; and many men by telling a lie often, come to believe it themſelves at laſt. "Deceiving and being deceived," as St. Paul joineth them, (2 Tim. III. 13.) frequently meet in the ſame character; and no perſons impoſe on themſelves more notoriouſly than the greateſt hypocrits. It is to be ſuſpected that moſt men are hypocrits in ſome degree or other: and nothing is more common than to hear people cenſure and find fault with thoſe very things, of which they themſelves are guilty, and yet perhaps do not know themſelves to be guilty. They are ſomewhat like David (2 Sam. XII. 5, 7.) ſaying "The man "that hath done this thing ſhall ſurely die;" and have need of ſome one to ſay to them as Nathan ſaid to him "Thou art the man," thou thyſelf doeſt that which thou condemneſt in another.

Laſtly, after the moſt ſtrict examination we can make, Who can number his errors? Who can tell how oft he offendeth? There will ſtill ſome reſerve of ſin lie lurking in the ſoul. And therefore beſides the moſt exact ſurvey we can take of ourſelves, we have reaſon every one of us to pray unto God with holy David, (Pſal. XIX. 12.) "Cleanſe thou me from my ſecret faults."

II. There may be theſe and other difficulties in the way to ſelf-knowlege, but difficulties are not impoſſibilities. The thing is poſſible; for otherwiſe neither would reaſon nor revelation preſcribe it, and hardly would the philoſophers, and much leſs would the inſpired writers have injoinedit. The difficulties ſhould rather quicken than ſlacken our endevors; and ſome help towards ſurmounting theſe difficulties is to know them, what they are and wherein they conſiſt. There are difficulties in every other part of knowlege as well as in this; but do we therefore deſiſt, or rather do we not therefore double our induſtry and pains? It may be impoſſible indeed to know ourſelves

perfectly, and ſo it is to know any thing elſe: but ſuch a knowlege of ourſelves, as may ſerve all the uſes of life and converſation, anſwer all the ends of religion and virtue, we may attain if we will take the proper means to attain it.

For this purpoſe we ſhould ſearch and ſtudy ourſelves, examin our own minds, and thoroughly diſcuſs the thoughts of our own hearts. We ſhould ſtudy ourſelves as much as we do other things, and ſift and weigh our own actions as much as we uſually do other peoples. We ſhould be as tender of others as we are of ourſelves, and as ſevere upon ourſelves as we are upon others. It is as much as concerns thy eternal ſalvation, therefore retire into thy cloſet, retire into thyſelf; and like the good pſalmiſt (Pſal. LXXVII. 6.) " commune with thy own heart " and ſearch out thy ſpirits." Lay thy hand upon thy breaſt, and ſeriouſly without reſerve or diſguiſe aſk and anſwer thyſelf. " Do I " love virtue though in a foe, and abhor vice though in a friend; " and do I ſtudy to conform my opinions to things, or deſire to re- " duce things to my opinions? Am I a Chriſtian becauſe I am verily " perſuaded of the truth and excellence of the Chriſtian religion above " all the religions of the world, or becauſe I was bred up in it, and " it is the religion of the country, and my only way to preferment? " I have injured no man, I have defrauded no man; but is it out of " fear of the jail or the gallows, or becauſe I ſcorn to be guilty of a " mean and ungenerous action though ever ſo ſecretly ever ſo much " to my advantage? Is my humanity and benevolence confined only " to thoſe of my own ſect and party, or doth it extend itſelf to all " mankind even to the ungrateful and undeſerving: and what I give " do I give it hoping and looking for ſomething again, or am I diſ- " poſed to do good only for the ſake of doing good, though I was " ſure it would never be known and never meet with any return? Do " I deſire to think only what is right, to commend only what is " worthy, to act only what is juſt and good; and would I not rather " ceaſe to think and ſpeak and act at all, than baſely inglorioufly vil- " lainouſly? Do I prize riches and life for their own ſake, or only as " they afford the means of doing good: and would I not be content

" to

" to ſacrifice the moſt proſperous circumſtances of life or even life it-
" ſelf to the glory of God and the good of mankind?" Theſe and many ſuch queſtions as theſe a man muſt aſk himſelf, before he can thoroughly know his own heart, its movements are ſo many and intricate, and the ſprings which ſet it a going ſo ſecret and involved.

The better to carry on this work of ſelf-examination, we ſhould allot certain portions of our time for it. We ſhould obſerve the golden rule of Pythagoras, and call ourſelves to account every night, while the circumſtances are freſh in our memory, for the behaviour of the preceding day, where we have been and what we have done, what duties we have omitted and what ſins we have committed; and if we have done any good, let us give God the glory; if we have done any evil, let us humbly implore his forgiveneſs, and reſolve againſt the like for the future. At leaſt we ſhould examin ourſelves thoroughly in times of religious retreat and recollection: ſuch is every Lord's day, ſuch is any faſt either public or private, ſuch is the commemoration of our Lord's advent, ſuch is the ſolemn ſeaſon of Lent, and the week before receiving the bleſſed ſacrament. Not that theſe times are in themſelves better and more proper for this work than any other, but it is likely that will not be done at any time, for which no particular time is aſſigned.

We ſhould likewiſe attend to what is ſaid of us by our enemies as well as by our friends; for though neither of them may paint us exactly, yet generally malice draweth truer likeneſſes than flattery. Both friends and enemies may be of real ſervice to us, and both may equally profit us, theſe by their cenſures, thoſe by their commendations; provided that if the former commend us, we live up to their commendations, if the latter defame us, we ſtill live ſo that no body may believe them.

We ſhould alſo make uſe of ſuch books as *the Whole Duty of man* for inſtance, where in the concluſion are drawn up brief heads of ſelf-examination concerning the breaches of our duty to God, to ourſelves, and to our neighbour; and try ourſelves upon each particu-

lar, and impartially aſk our own hearts whether we are guilty or not guilty.

But be ſure let us never ſtifle the whiſpers of conſcience, but always liſten to its ſuggeſtions; and no mirror will more exactly reflect the image of our body than this will of our mind; like a faithful friend, it will always applaud us whenever we do well; like an injured enemy, it will condemn us whenever we do evil.

And the better to inform this conſcience, let us diligently compare our lives with the word of God. Be that our teſt and ſtandard, the rule to regulate all our deſigns, the touchſtone to try all our actions. For as the author to the Hebrews expreſſeth it, (IV. 12.) and as we may apply it upon this occaſion, "the word of God is quick and "powerful, and ſharper than any two edged ſword, piercing even to "the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit and of the joints and mar-"row, and is a diſcerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Laſtly, whether we know our own hearts or not, they are perfectly known to God, and it is in vain to uſe any artifice or diſguiſe before him. This is ſufficiently intimated in the words of the prophet, (Jer. XVII. 9, 10.) "The heart is deceitful above all things and deſpe-"rately wicked, who can know it? I the Lord ſearch the heart, I "try the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways and "according to the fruit of his doings." It is a happy thing indeed if our heart do not condemn us, but though we "know nothing by "ourſelves," as the apoſtle ſaith, (1 Cor. IV. 4.) "yet are we not "hereby juſtified." How well ſoever therefore we may think of ourſelves, yet we ſhould humble our hearts before God; and beg of him that the knowlege which is ſo difficult to us he would make eaſy, what is good in us he would ſtrengthen and confirm, what is amiſs in us he would correct and reform, and ſo bring us to everlaſting life. (Jer. XVII. 14.) "Heal us, O Lord, and we ſhall be healed; ſave "us, and we ſhall be ſaved, for thou art our praiſe."

III.

(4) Αναχωρησεις αὐλοις ζητεσιν, αγροικιας, και αιτιαλεις, και ορη· ὁλον δε τὸ ιδιωτικωτατον εστιν, ἐξον ὁπου ἀν ὡρας εθελησης εις ἑαυτὸν αναχωρειν· ουδαμου γαρ οὕτε ἡσυχιωτερον οὕτε απραγμονεστερον ανθρωπος αναχωρει η εις την ἑαυτου ψυχην. Lib. 4. Cap. 3.

(5) Ενδον βλεπε· ενδον ἡ πηγη του αγαθου, και αει αναβλυειν

III. By theſe means we may arrive at a competent degree of ſelf-knowlege, and for our farther encouragement we ſhall experience many and great advantages attending it. To ſtudy ourſelves is the moſt effectual proof that we can give of our love to ourſelves; and we cannot ſurely think ſuch an employment beneath us, or pretend want of leiſure and opportunity for it, when the great emperor and philoſopher Marcus Antoninus, amidſt ſo many affairs and avocations, compoſed twelve books of *his converſation with himſelf* for the regulating of his conduct and behaviour in every part of life; and moſt uſeful books they are, written with all the acuteneſs of a philoſopher, and with all the majeſty of an emperor; and though the works of an Heathen, yet worthy of the peruſal of every Chriſtian. In them it is excellently ſaid, (4) 'People ſeek retirements for themſelves, country-houſes and ſea-ſhores and mountains: but this is all vulgar, when you may retire into yourſelf at what hour ſoever you pleaſe, for a man retires no where more quietly than into his own ſoul.' 'Look within (5), ſays he, within is a fountain of good, and always ſpringing up, if you will always dig.' And (6) again, 'It is ſeldom ſeen, that any man is the worſe for not knowing the ſtate of another's mind, but they muſt needs be wretched who attend not to the motions of their own.'

Certainly the ſtudy of ourſelves is a more generous, a more uſeful, a more becoming employment than prying into the faults, and ripping up the characters of others. We ſhall ſee never the worſe for the "mote" that is in our "brother's eye," but how can we ſee clearly with a "beam" in "our own eye?"

They too, who are ſo forward to paſs their judgment upon others, may pleaſe to conſider, that the man who hath ſtudied moſt the various turns and inflections, the counterpoiſes and balances of his own mind, can give the ſhreudeſt gueſs at the mind of others, and at what they would do in ſuch and ſuch circumſtances. It is confeſſedly

αναβλυειν δυναμενη, εαν αει σκαπτης. Lib. 7. Cap. 59.

(6) Παρα μεν το μη εφιςανειν τι εν τη αλλη ψυχη γιγνεσθαι, ου ῥαδιως τις ωφθη κακοδαιμονων· τες δε τοις της ιδιας ψυχης κινημασι μη παρακολουθουντας, αναγκη κακοδαιμονειν. Lib. 2. Cap. 8.

a great

a great part of wiſdom to know the world and mankind; but wiſdom, like charity, begins at home; and the readieſt way to know other people is firſt to know ourſelves. (7) Ab uno diſce omnes, from one we may in a great meaſure learn all. Human nature is generally alike in her workings. We may be compoſed of different metals, (ſome of gold, ſome of ſilver, ſome of braſs and ſome of lead) but however we are all of us caſt pretty much in the ſame mold. The phyſician, who knoweth moſt of his own caſe and conſtitution, will diſcover the greateſt ſagacity in judging of another's; and in like manner he will underſtand mankind beſt, who beſt underſtands himſelf.

As knowing ourſelves may improve us in the knowlege of the world and of mankind, ſo it may prove alſo the means of conducting us to what is better, to ſome knowlege of God. From the conſideration of the frame and organs of the body, of the powers and faculties of the ſoul, we muſt ſee and feel that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, that we did not make ourſelves, that we are therefore the handiwork of ſome ſuperior being tranſcendent in power wiſdom and goodneſs; and ſo from the contemplation of the human nature we may riſe by juſt degrees to ſome ideas of the divine perfections. Man being made in the image of God, by a careful ſurvey of the copy we may the better judge of the excellences of the great original.

The ſtudy of ourſelves is a ſtudy that more nearly concerns us than any other, and in which we can arrive at certainty if in any other. For what concerns a man ſo much as his ſelf, and what can he know if he cannot know his own thoughts and affections? Without doubt it is a great ſatisfaction to know our company and friends, that we may the better accommodate ourſelves to their opinions and humors; but ſurely it is much more neceſſary to know our conſtant and inſeparable companion for life, our own mind and temper.

The diſſection of the heart, the anatomy of the paſſions; this is the philoſophy ſuperior to all other philoſophy, and is the foundation and ground-work of morality and religion itſelf. The ſun ſhineth as pleaſantly upon the rude peaſant as upon the moſt learned philoſopher,

(7) Virgil.

who

who can deſcribe its motions, and account for its influence. The blood circulateth and the pulſe beateth as regularly in thoſe who think not of it at all, as in thoſe who think of it ever ſo profoundly. But what health or ſoundneſs, what order or œconomy is there in a mind, that is not ſtudiouſly obſerved, and is kept under no certain regimen and controll? Whenever the body is affected with pain or ſickneſs, we ſeek inſtantly to know the cauſe, and apply the cure: and is it not much ſuperior and nobler to learn the diſtempers and remedies of our ſouls?

The knowlege of ourſelves is a knowlege, in which we can have no ſharers, no rivals; and if a man will not gain it for himſelf, no body can acquire it for him. For (2 Cor. II. 11.) "what man knoweth "the things of a man, ſave the ſpirit of man which is in him?"

It is a knowlege, that not like other knowlege "puffeth up," but is the mother of humility; and the more we know of ourſelves, the more we diſcover our vanity and emptineſs. If you ſee a man proud and conceited of himſelf, depend upon it he knoweth not himſelf. (1 Cor. VIII. 2.) "If any man thinketh that he knoweth any thing, he "knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." Vain man! be humble at leaſt till thou knoweſt thyſelf, and when thou knoweſt thyſelf, thou wilt of courſe be humble.

It may teach us not only a leſſon of humility, but likewiſe a leſſon of charity. For ſince it is not without ſome difficulty that we know ourſelves, we may learn not to be too haſty, too peremptory in judging of others. But yet if we will obſerve it, the moſt ignorant are always the moſt free and forward in giving characters: as in matters of learning thoſe are ever the moſt ready to criticiſe another's works, who were never able to produce any thing good of their own. "Phyſician "heal thyſelf" (Luke IV. 23.) was a good proverb; and it may be ſaid with the ſame reaſon, preſume not to cenſure another before thou knoweſt thyſelf. (Matt. VII. 5.) "Thou hypocrit, firſt caſt out the "beam out of thine own eye, and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt "out the mote out of thy brother's eye." He who is duly ſenſible of his own failings and imperfections, will be leſs ſtrict and ſevere upon thoſe

thoſe of others. It naturally maketh us more dependent upon God, and leſs cenſorious upon men: and no man can be proof againſt the criticiſms of others, who hath not been uſed to criticiſe himſelf. This method will either not make us need correction, or (what is next of virtue) patiently bear it.

It may teach us not only charity to others, but alſo to ſet a juſt value upon ourſelves. For as (8) Cicero well obſerves, the precept of knowing ourſelves was not given merely to humble human arrogance, but alſo that we might know our own perfections. This may oftentimes prove a moſt excellent guard and preſervative of virtue; may hinder us from waſting our time, miſpending our money, or doing any thing mean or unworthy of our character and ſtation: enable us to know our good qualities as well as our bad ones, and to cultivate the former as well as correct the latter; inſtruct us to keep up the reſpect that is due to ourſelves, and upon all occaſions to exert a proper courage and reſolution, becoming good men and good chriſtians.

What other way can we be aſſured, whether we deſerve the cenſures of our enemies, or the praiſes of our friends, and that the former do not abuſe and ſlander, or that the latter do not flatter and betray us? What other way can a man eſtabliſh the empire and command of the mind, and inſure himſelf one and the ſame to day as yeſterday, and to morrow as to day? A man's mind is his heaven or his hell; and who would not regulate that upon which his happineſs or his miſery principally depends?

David was a man who thoroughly ſtudied his own heart, and this was the way he became the man after God's heart: And he not only did thus himſelf, but alſo recommends the practice of ſoliloquy and ſelf-converſe to others; (Pſal. IV. 4.) "Stand in awe," ſaith he, "and ſin not, commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be "ſtill:" And the pſalms are a ſpiritual looking-glaſs or mirror to ſhow a man's ſelf to himſelf, and repreſent the devout ſoul in all poſtures and conditions of life; and (James I. 22, 23, 24.) "the man

(8) Illud γνωθι σεαυτον noli putare ad arrogantiam minuendam ſolum eſſe dictum, verum etiam ut bona noſtra norimus. Cic.

"who

" who beholdeth his face in" this " glaſs, and" then " goeth his way, " and ſtraightway forgetteth what manner of man he was, is only a " hearer of the word, and not a doer, deceiving his own ſelf."

The man who never adjuſts and balances his accounts, is not likely to thrive in the world, and will probably let his affairs go to ruin. It is the ſame in our ſpiritual concerns as in our temporal: He who never taketh account of himſelf, can never know what ground he gaineth in virtue, or what he loſeth in vice, what in his conduct is to be continued and approved or what to be corrected and reformed. What ſupine negligent creatures are thoſe, who have need of a fit of ſickneſs or ſome loſſes in the world, to remind them of themſelves, and to make them think of their own immortal ſouls? What is a total neglect of this kind but diſtraction and madneſs; and what are madmen but men *beſides themſelves?* At leaſt it is a ſtrong ſymptom of a guilty conſcience, when a man can never abide to be by himſelf, and examin his own heart. He muſt ſurely be ſtrangely galled, who cannot bear even his own handling. And what ſignifies deferring this work of ſelf-inſpection? It muſt be done, and will be done one time or other; and the longer it is deferred, the more fatal it will be. The wounds of conſcience like other wounds, feſter and grow worſe by being neglected; and what might be cured by probing at firſt, may end in the cutting off a limb or the loſs of life.

God is emphatically ſtiled in ſcripture " the God who trieth the " heart and the reins:" and what account can they give of themſelves to him in the day of judgment, who have never once been at the pains of examining themſelves in this life? They could not endure ſo much as to try themſelves privately in their cloſets, and how then will they ſtand a public trial at the bar of divine juſtice in the ſight of men and angels? (Luke VIII. 17.) " Nothing is ſecret that ſhall " not" then " be made manifeſt, neither any thing hid that ſhall not" then " be known." And what a melancholy thing will it be, when they firſt come to know themſelves, to know themſelves to be for ever miſerable!

Let us therefore judge ourſelves, brethren, that we be not judged and condemned of the Lord. (1 John III. 20, 21.) " If our heart " condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God: but if our " heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all " things." And therefore it is not enough for us to know ourſelves, but we ſhould alſo pray unto God, who knoweth us better, after the manner of the good pſalmiſt (CXXXIX. 23, 24.) " Search us and " know our hearts, try us and know our thoughts: And ſee if there " be any wicked way in us, and lead us in the way everlaſting."

DISSERTATION XLV.

On ANGER.

AS the paſſions are the ſource and occaſion of moſt evils and calamities in life, the providence of God hath been ſometimes impeached for making man of ſuch a frame and conſtitution. But they who find fault with the frame and conſtitution of man, do not ſurely enough conſider his place and rank in the ſcale of beings. They do not remember that he is [nexus utriuſque mundi] the bond and cement of both worlds, a ſort of middle creature between the different orders of angels above him, and the various ſpecies of brutes below him: and though he be not framed as perfect as he might be, yet is he not framed as perfect as the rank and condition of ſuch a middle creature will allow? Are not his powers and faculties exactly adjuſted and adapted to his place and ſtation? and was he more or leſs perfect, would there not be a chaſm or defect in the creation, would there not be as it were a link broken in the chain of nature, and by that means the regular ſeries and gradation of beings be diſturbed?

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Where reaſon and underſtanding are in perfection, there paſſion is excluded, mind directs and governs all in all: And therefore in God, a being of the moſt complete and abſolute perfections, there is all underſtanding and no paſſion, though ſometimes in ſcripture language, and in condeſcenſion to our capacities, paſſions are attributed to him who is all mind, as ſometimes alſo limbs and members are aſcribed to him who is all ſpirit: and the nearer any creatures approach to the perfections of God, the freer they are from paſſion; and the more ſubject they are to it, the farther they are removed from him. On the other hand where there is little or no reaſon and underſtanding, there paſſion and appetite prevail, inſtinct directs and governs all in all: as we may ſee plainly in the brutal part of the creation, that is continually moved and incited by theſe ſprings of action: and the more any creatures are like the brutes, the more they are under the dominion of their appetites and paſſions; and the leſs they are under this dominion, the leſs they reſemble the brute creation. Now man being as I ſay a ſort of middle creature, partly formed, like the brutes, out of the duſt of the earth, and partly made, like the angels, in the image of God, he is neither all reaſon and underſtanding, nor all appetite and paſſion; but hath appetites and paſſions to prompt and incite him to action where only reaſon and underſtanding would be too abſtract and lazy, and hath reaſon and underſtanding to direct and moderate his actions where only appetites and paſſions would precipitate him into extravagance and exceſs.

Or may not the ſame thing be conſidered and repreſented in another light? May it not reaſonably be preſumed and aſſerted, that the paſſions are properties and affections of corporeal and ſpiritual ſubſtances united? they are found neither in body alone nor in ſpirit alone, but ariſe from the union of both together. And therefore God, who is a perfectly pure ſpirit, is perfectly free from all paſſion. The higheſt angels are probably cloathed with ſome fine ethereal bodies, they are certainly not ſuch pure ſpirits as God; and therefore neither are they ſo free from paſſion. But as the angels are chiefly ſpiritual beings, they are chiefly intellectual beings under the guidance and direction of

reaſon and underſtanding; and as the brutes are chiefly corporeal beings, they are chiefly ſenſual beings under the guidance and direction of appetite and paſſion. And the proportion holdeth through all the different ſpecies and kinds of creatures; in the ſame degree as they are more ſpiritual, they are more intellectual, the more refined are their reaſon and underſtanding; and in the ſame degree they are more corporeal, they are more ſenſual, the groſſer are their appetites and paſſions. Now man, being a compound of ſoul and body, partakes of the perfections and imperfections of the one and the other. As he is in one part body, he is indued with appetites and paſſions; and he is likewiſe indued with reaſon and underſtanding, as he is in the other part ſpirit. His reaſon and underſtanding would be too remiſs in this priſon of the body without appetites and paſſions to rouze and employ them; and his appetites and paſſions would be too powerful without reaſon and underſtanding to check and reſtrain them. And when he preſerves the ſuperiority of his mind over his body, then he plainly evinces his alliance and kindred with the angels; when he ſuffers his body to gain the aſcendent over his mind, then he degrades himſelf to the level with the "beaſts that periſh."

You ſee then what is the uſe and intent of the paſſions in general, and for what reaſons they were implanted in man; and if we were to examin each paſſion in particular, we ſhould find them not only very innocent in themſelves, but very uſeful and neceſſary to the various ends and purpoſes of life. Love and hatred, deſire and averſion, hope and fear, joy and ſorrow, if placed upon proper objects, and exerciſed upon proper occaſions, if conducted by righteous means and directed to righteous ends, are all of the greateſt uſe and advantage; and it is only the abuſe of them, that renders them pernicious and ſinful. *Anger* carries a harſher ſound with it than moſt of them; but the apoſtle doth not, Stoic like, adviſe the total abolition and extirpation of it. He underſtood human nature too well abſolutely to forbid this paſſion, and like a wiſe philoſopher is only for reſtraining it. "Be ye angry," ſays he, (Eph. IV. 26.) "and ſin not:" If you are angry upon any occaſion, take care that your anger is ſuch, that you fall not into ſin. And

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in diſcourſing farther upon this ſubject, we will 1ſt conſider how we may be angry and ſin not, or in what caſes anger is reaſonable and lawful; and 2dly conſider how we may be angry and ſin, or in what caſes anger is unreaſonable and unlawful; and 3dly and laſtly offer ſome arguments for the moderating and reſtraining of this paſſion, with ſome inſtructions how to moderate and reſtrain it.

I. Let us conſider how we may be angry and ſin not, or in what caſes anger is reaſonable and lawful.

Our Saviour forbids us to be angry with our brother "without "cauſe;" (Matt. V. 22.) which implies that there may be a ſufficient *cauſe* of anger. And indeed the man, who is not capable of being provoked, is capable of nothing. Such inſenſibility you may call meekneſs and good-nature if you pleaſe, but it rather deſerves the name of ſtupidity. The men of the brighteſt parts and of the quickeſt apprehenſions are moſt apt to kindle into the firſt motions of anger: And this paſſion is wiſely implanted in our breaſts to rouze and animate us, or otherwiſe we ſhould grow too remiſs and lazy, and ſhould not have ſpirit and courage enough to reſiſt and repel any injuries or evils to which human life is obnoxious. Anger is a ſort of natural armour, as neceſſary to our preſervation, as teeth or horns or claws are to ſome other creatures. Upon the firſt offer of any inſult and injury it inſtantly rouzeth us to our defenſe with ſuch a ſudden inſtinct as the eyelid cloſeth upon the approach of any danger to the eye. It ſummons and exerts our ſpirits, more than we can do upon cool deliberation; and therefore a man in a paſſion is ſtronger than at another time, and more able to reſiſt and defeat any violence or oppoſition. If we were not ſometimes thus animated, if we were to be meek and paſſive upon every occaſion, we ſhould invite injurious treatment by the very means which we took to avoid it. It is only the fear of our anger and reſentment that can keep an ill-natured world from conſtantly annoying and offending us. That is our flaming ſword as I may ſay, which turneth every way to guard our tree of life.

Injury and evil are proper objects of our anger and reſentment, as well when done to others as to ourſelves. If we were all made up of meekneſs

meekneſs and compaſſion, if we had not a mixture of ſeverity to balance the tenderneſs of our nature, injuries would never be proſecuted nor right aſſerted, the ſword of juſtice might grow ruſty in the ſcabbard, and would never be drawn even againſt the moſt hainous offenders. Some meaſure of anger and reſentment is therefore a great ſupport of ſociety; and a man who can hear the orphan's cries and behold the widow's tears without pity for the ſufferers, and without indignation againſt the oppreſſors, muſt have a very ſoft head or a very hard heart. They who are moſt iraſcible, moſt apt to kindle into ſudden anger (1), are often perſons of the greateſt good-nature. If they are ſoon provoked, they are ſoon appeaſed. When the ſpirit is long in raiſing, it is commonly long in laying too.

If injuries done to men may reaſonably provoke our indignation, how can we be cool and unconcerned when the worſt of offenſes are committed againſt God? Is it expedient that we ſhould reſent for ourſelves and for our fellow creatures; and ſhall we have no regard, no paſſion for the honor of our and their common Creator? We have certainly no love for God, if with patience we can ſee and hear his ordinances profaned, his word vilified, and his name blaſphemed. Moſes is ſaid to have been "the meekeſt man upon earth;" and yet how was his ſpirit provoked at the idolatry of the Iſraelites? The bleſſed Jeſus, who was meekneſs itſelf, is yet ſaid by the evangeliſt (Mark III. 5.) to look upon the Phariſees "with anger being grieved for the "hardneſs of their hearts:" and when the temple was profaned, with what rage and vehemence did he drive out the buyers and ſellers? ſo that (John II. 17.) "the diſciples remembered" and applied the ſaying of the pſalmiſt, "The zeal of thine houſe hath eaten me up." Nay God himſelf is ſometimes in ſcripture ſaid to be angry; and we may be certain, that this paſſion though in a figure would not have been attributed to him, if it had been any thing ſinful in itſelf.

The proper objects then of anger and reſentment are violence and injury done to ourſelves, injuſtice and oppreſſion exerciſed to others, and profaneneſs and contempt of God's holy name and his word; and

(1) Iraſci facilis, tamen ut placabilis eſſem. Hor.

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in theſe caſes we may ſay with Jonah (IV. 9.) but with much more reaſon, that " we do well to be angry."

II. Having thus conſidered how we may be angry and ſin not, or in what caſes anger is reaſonable and lawful; let us conſider ſecondly how we may be angry and ſin, or in what caſes anger is unreaſonable and unlawful. And in ſhort it may be ſaid, that it is unreaſonable and unlawful, when employed upon improper objects and occaſions, and when exerted in undue meaſure and manner.

It is unreaſonable and unlawful, when employed upon improper objects and occaſions—when it proceeds from little or no cauſe in others, when a man is blown up into a paſſion upon any trifling occaſion, and his temper is ruffled by every croſs accident, like the ſea by every adverſe gale. A paſſion without ſufficient cauſe cannot be without ſin.—So likewiſe when it ariſeth from any vicious cauſe in ourſelves, as want of conſideration, a ſpirit of intolerance and perſecution, covetouſneſs, pride, envy, too good an opinion of ourſelves or too mean an one of others. A paſſion that is founded in ſin muſt needs be ſinful.—So likewiſe when it is vented upon things inanimate or creatures irrational, as when Balaam was in ſuch a fury with his aſs, and Xerxes gave orders for whipping the ſea. For not every evil is to raiſe our anger, but evil that carrieth in it the notion of injury; and ſuch creatures cannot with any propriety be ſaid to injure us.—So likewiſe when it is diſcharged upon thoſe, who can as little be ſaid to injure us as brute creatures, children and ideots; or thoſe, who though poſſibly they may have injured us, yet never deſigned it and perhaps could not help it. In ſuch a caſe reſentment in us would be more blameable than the treſpaſs in them.—So likewiſe when it is expreſſed without diſtinction of perſons; ſuperiors or inferiors, friends or enemies, relations or ſtrangers: And more eſpecially when it is expreſſed againſt God, when we charge him fooliſhly and fret and murmur at his diſpenſations. The creature to be angry with the creator is ſuch a monſtrous incongruity as we could hardly believe if we did not frequently ſee!

As anger is unreaſonable and unlawful when employed upon improper objects and occaſions, ſo likewiſe is it when exerted in undue meaſure and manner, and it is exerted in undue meaſure and manner —when it exceeds proportion and is greater than the value of the thing deſerves; when we are as outrageous for a trifle as for a matter of importance, and grow habitually paſſionate or peeviſh, rage outwardly or fret inwardly according as our temper and ſpirits are ſtronger or weaker.—So likewiſe when it exceeds the bounds of decency and diſcretion; when our fury betrays us to ſay and do fooliſh things, to call names and uſe horrid oaths and imprecations, to curſe men and blaſpheme God.—So likewiſe when it is diſcharged at improper times and places, when we give a looſe to paſſion before our ſuperiors, are quarrelſome and abuſive in company, rage and bluſter in public aſſemblies, and carry our reſentments even to the horns of the altar.—So likewiſe when it continues long upon us, and thereby degenerates into malice and revenge. "Let not the ſun go down up-"on your wrath" is the apoſtle's advice immediately following, "Be "ye angry, and ſin not; let not the ſun go down upon your wrath:" and a (2) Heathen could teach his ſcholars this leſſon, that whatever differences they had in the day, they ſhould yet ſhake hands and be reconciled before night. A wiſe man may kindle into anger, but as Solomon ſaith, (Eccleſ. VII. 9.) "it reſteth in the boſom of fools." —So likewiſe when it remains, after the party offending hath been proſecuted by due form of law, for if Chriſtians may carry their reſentments as far as the law, yet ſurely they ought not to carry them beyond it; or after a man hath made ſubmiſſion and ſatisfaction for the injuries which he may have done us: And more eſpecially when it remains at our devotions, where we ought to "lift up holy hands "without wrath;" for how can we hope for mercy, if we will ſhow no mercy? how can we expect that "God will forgive us our treſ-"paſſes," if "we will not alſo forgive men their treſpaſſes?"

III. As anger in ſo many inſtances is unreaſonable and unlawful, we ſhall thirdly and laſtly offer ſome arguments for the moderating and

(2) Pythagoras.

reſtraining

reſtraining of this paſſion with ſome inſtructions how to moderate and reſtrain it.

Think then of the extreme folly of this paſſion in exceſs. It is the mark of a weak and little mind to have no more command over one's ſelf; and accordingly in ſickneſs and pain, in childhood and old age, which is a ſecond childhood, we are moſt ſubject to it. It is not only the effect of folly, but the cauſe of folly too. Counſel and advice to a man in a paſſion are as unſeaſonable (Prov. XXVI. 1.) "as ſnow in "ſummer." He will not attend even to his own reaſon, and no wonder then he will not liſten to that of others. He is more like a madman than a rational creature, and plungeth into abſurdities with as little ſenſe or reflection "as the horſe ruſheth into the battle." I ſuppoſe that the intent of anger, if any thing at all is intended, is to ſtrike an awe into people; but inſtead of reverence it raiſeth contempt, which is another inſtance of its folly. In any debate, in any controverſy it is parting with the ſtaff out of your own hands. It is the very thing that your enemy would deſire, and you cannot give him a greater advantage over you. Truth and paſſion have nothing to do together; and if a man is in a rage, it is a very ſhrewd ſign that he is in the wrong. Reaſon like its divine author is not in the "whirl-"wind" or the "earthquake" or the "fire." (1 Kings XIX.) The "ſtill ſmall voice," is the voice of reaſon and of God.

Think again of the deformity and diſagreeableneſs of this paſſion in exceſs. The Spartans uſed to ſhow a drunken man to their children in order to deter them from drunkenneſs; and the ſight of a man in a paſſion is almoſt enough to cure us of being paſſionate. He is as horrid a ſpectacle, as if he was in a fit of convulſion, his eyes rolling, his mouth foaming, his limbs trembling, and his features all diſtorted. And can any thing be more diſagreeable in public or domeſtic life, in any office, in any ſtation, than a man of ſuch a combuſtible ſpirit that with the leaſt ſpark will kindle into a flame? All who can will avoid him as unfit for civil ſociety; and thoſe, who cannot avoid him but are obliged to be in the way of his peeviſhneſs and paſſion, are indeed extremely to be pitied. No body will bear to live with

him; but they, whoſe circumſtances are ſuch, that they cannot live well without him.

Think beſides of the inconvenience and danger of this paſſion in exceſs. It is as painful to a man's ſelf, as it is diſagreeable to others; impairs the health and ſpirits, is agony to the mind as well as convulſion to the body; and though it may make a man ſtronger for the time, yet it leaveth him weaker afterwards. If you will not get the dominion over your paſſion, your paſſion will get the dominion over you. And of all the paſſions anger is perhaps the moſt violent, the moſt headſtrong and imperious, and therefore is above all others diſtinguiſhed by the name of *paſſion*. Nothing hath occaſioned greater evils and calamities in life. What cities hath it laid in aſhes? What countries hath it depopulated? The anger of a man could furniſh matter for an (3) Epic poem. Other paſſions may have ſlain their thouſands, but this hath deſtroyed its ten thouſands. In more private characters how often doth it expoſe men to quarrels and engage them in duels? An angry man is always in ſome broil or other. As Solomon affirms, (Prov. XIX. 19.) "A man of great wrath "ſhall ſuffer puniſhment, for if thou deliver him yet thou muſt "do it again."

Think moreover of the great ſin of this paſſion in exceſs. Acting againſt reaſon is acting againſt God; and what is man that he ſhould be angry, who is but duſt and aſhes, and infinitely a greater ſinner againſt heaven than any man can be againſt him? and whom is he uſually angry with but his fellow-creature and fellow-Chriſtian, one who hath the ſame father and the ſame redeemer, one who is a brother, nay more than a brother, a member of the ſame body in Chriſt Jeſus? Can any thing be more contrary to all that our Saviour taught and all that he did? (1 Pet. II. 23.) "who when he was reviled, re-"viled not again; when he ſuffered, he threatned not; but com-"mitted himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly." Freedom from paſſion is not only for our preſent eaſe, but alſo for our future happineſs. With the mind of furies how can we ever be fit for the ſociety

(3) The Iliad.

of

of angels? In vain ſhall we expect to get to heaven, unleſs we are poſſeſſed of the temper of heaven.

Reſiſt therefore the beginnings of this paſſion, reſiſt it in your youth; for few perſons grow milder and better natured as age advances. The courſe of the paſſions is like the courſe of rivers, which are weak at the ſpring head, and you may turn them almoſt whither you pleaſe; but the farther they run, the greater and ſtronger they grow.—Live not too high and luxurious, for high living inflames the blood, and diſpoſes men to be choleric and haſty. All creatures the more fleſh they devour, the fiercer they are. You muſt take off ſome of the fuel, if you would leſſen the fire.—Conſider where you are moſt expoſed to paſſion, and there guard moſt againſt it. Think what objects and occaſions have moſt been uſed to raiſe it for the time paſt, and avoid them for the time to come.—Avoid the company of the angry, if you would not be ſo yourſelf. It is hardly poſſible to mix much in converſation with the quarrelſome without engaging in quarrels.—Set not your affections too much upon any thing, and you will not be too much provoked at any diſappointment. Few accidents in life will be able to ruffle and diſcompoſe you, if you are reaſonably indifferent.—"Think not more highly "of yourſelf than you ought to think (Rom. XII. 3.) but think "ſoberly;" for the leaſt offenſe that is but as it were a molehill pride magnifies into a mountain. As pride and paſſion, ſo humility and meekneſs are twins, and go hand in hand together.—Put the moſt favorable conſtruction upon the words and actions of others. Look upon men as you chooſe to do upon pictures in the beſt and moſt commodious light, and be more diſpoſed to be pleaſed than to be offended. People are often out of humor for ſomething ſaid or done, only becauſe they miſapprehend it.—Be not offended with any man upon ſurmiſes and reports only, ſtay at leaſt till you are ſatisfied of the truth; (Ecclus XIX. 15.) "it may be he hath not done it, it may be "he hath not ſaid it; for many times it is a ſlander, and believe not "every tale."—When you find yourſelf growing into a paſſion, take time to conſider, walk a little aſide, count twenty or a hundred, and

you will be cool again.—You can command your paſſion before your ſuperiors, and why then can you not in the more immediate preſence of God? The thought of his Omnipreſence is of itſelf enough to prevent all immoderate anger, and awe us into ſilence.—Farther pray unto God, that he would give you the ſpirit of charity and meekneſs, of forbearance and forgiveneſs. His grace will meliorate nature.—The better to encourage you, "look up unto Jeſus the author and finiſher "of our faith." (Heb. XII. 3.) "Conſider him that endured ſuch "contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, leſt you be wearied and "faint in your mind."—Finally remember, that among "the works "of the fleſh" (Gal. V. 20, &c.) are reckoned "hatred, variance, "emulations, wrath, ſtrife; but the fruit of the ſpirit is love, joy, "peace, long ſuffering, gentleneſs, goodneſs: and they that are "Chriſt's have crucified the fleſh with the affections and luſts."—I will conclude all with the advice of the pſalmiſt, (XXXVII. 8, &c.) "Ceaſe from anger, and forſake wrath, fret not thyſelf in any wiſe "to do evil: For evil doers ſhall be cut off, but the meek ſhall in-"herit the earth, and ſhall delight themſelves in the abundance of "peace."

DISSERTATION XLVI.

On the Beauty of Virtue.

WHOEVER is the leaſt converſant in the writings of the Heathen moraliſts (the Stoics and Platoniſts eſpecially) cannot but have obſerved how highly they extol the beauty and lovelineſs of virtue. They often declare (1) that what is becoming is honeſt, and what

(1) Quod decet, honeſtum eſt; et quod honeſtum eſt, decet. Hoc de quo loquimur decorum, totum illud quidem eſt cum virtute confuſum, ſed mente et cogitatione diſtinguitur. Cic. Off. I. 27.

Formam

what is honeſt is becoming; that virtue and decency are ſo united, that they can be ſeparated only in thought and imagination; that ſuch is the form and as it were face of honeſty, that if it could be ſeen by human eyes it would excite a wonderful love of itſelf. What is thus inculcated by the Heathen philoſophers is in great meaſure confirmed by no leſs authority than that of the inſpired philoſopher, St. Paul, who recommends virtue on account of the beauty and amiableneſs of its nature.—(Philip. IV. 8.) " Whatſoever things are " lovely"—intimating that whatſoever things are lovely are virtuous, and whatſoever things are virtuous are lovely.

But ſenſual minds perhaps cannot eaſily conceive that virtue is of ſuch an amiable nature as is here repreſented; and therefore we will ſhow in the firſt place, that it really is ſo, and in the ſecond place endevor to give ſome account why it is ſo, and muſt be ſo in the nature of things.

Firſt I am to ſhow that virtue is naturally beautiful and lovely. And how can we judge of this ſo well as by the effects? for effects beſt diſcover their cauſes.

Now virtue is often not altogether without a good effect upon the body. I do not pretend to ſay with the Stoics, that only the wiſe and virtuous are handſome but this at leaſt may be ſaid with truth, that virtue always conduceth to one's health, and if it doth not give grace and beauty of itſelf, yet it maketh grace ſtill more graceful, beauty ſtill more beautiful. But if the effects of virtue upon the body be not ſo viſible, the effects of vice are manifeſt to all, and how anger, how envy, how drunkenneſs, how debauchery of all ſorts, how even a little peeviſhneſs and ill-nature affect the body is too well known to need a particular repreſentation.

Virtue and vice operate not only on the body, but on the mind much more ſenſibly. For how are we pleaſed and delighted with ourſelves, when we have acted a good part and done our duty: as on the contrary when we have acted baſely and villainouſly, how are we diſ-

Formam quidem ipſam, Marce fili, et tanquam faciem honeſti vides; quæ ſi oculis cerneretur, mirabiles amores (ut ait Plato) excitaret *ſapientiæ*, I read *ſui* with Faernus. Ibid. 5.

guſted

guſted with ourſelves, and aſhamed of ourſelves for it? Conſcience hath generally a quick and lively ſenſe of the beauty of virtue and of the deformity of vice; we do not barely perceive the difference between them, but we actually feel it; and whatever we may outwardly profeſs, yet our hearts will always applaud us for doing well, and condemn us for doing evil. No charm like that of a good conſcience, no fury like that of an ill one! And the beauty of virtue never cloys and ſatiates the mind like other beauty; but continually improves upon us, and the more we do good the more always we love and delight to do it.

We ſhall find the ſenſe too of the generality of mankind to be the ſame in this reſpect with that of our own mind and conſcience. For all nations ancient and modern, polite and barbarous, of forms of government though ever ſo different, of religions though ever ſo contrary, have yet univerſally agreed in this, to honor and reward virtue, to diſcountenance and puniſh vice. Nay in ſeveral countries, even in Greece and Italy, at Athens and at Rome, their heroes and lawgivers, their great and good men, have not only been admired and reverenced when living, but alſo deified and adored when dead: And the Virtues themſelves have been worſhipped as Goddeſſes, and have had their temples. This ſhoweth the great veneration that they had for virtue, though their veneration was carried too high in theſe inſtances. Indeed it is impoſſible for us to love, it is impoſſible for us to truſt any man, whom we think not to be an honeſt and good man. "For a "good man ſome would even dare to die," ſaith the apoſtle, (Rom. V. 7.) ſuch is the peculiar affection that men have for goodneſs!

We love alſo virtue for virtue's ſake, and not only for the profit and advantage ariſing from it. For we honor a generous and good man, though it never was nor ever will be in his power to do us any ſervice. We are ſmitten with the worthies of antiquity; and even in the reading

(2) Quis Pullum Numitorem, Fregellanum proditorem, quanquam reipub. noſtræ profuit, non odit? Cic. de Fin. V. 22.

(3) Placet ſuapte natura adeoque gratioſa eſt virtus, ut inſitum etiam ſit malis probare meliores. Senec. de Benef. l. 4.

——Video meliora proboque
Deteriora ſequor?—— Ovid.

(4) Quis

ing of poetry and hiſtory, how are we delighted with a fine character, how do we nauſeate and deteſt an ill one, though we never reaped any benefit from the one, never received any injury from the other? We cannot help loving in ſome ſort even the virtues we loſe by, and hating even the vices we get by; and (2) what advantage ſoever men may receive from the ſin, yet commonly they have a mean opinion of the ſinner; what uſe ſoever may be made of an information, yet generally we deſpiſe the men who turn informers. Honeſty may not be always profitable, but it is always lovely; and we value and eſteem a man more who loſeth by doing what is right, than one who gaineth ever ſo much by doing what is wrong.

Nor only the good but alſo the wicked themſelves feel the charms and own the ſurpaſſing excellence of virtue. Hypocrits therefore imitate it, knowing that vice paſſes better the more it appears in the dreſs and ſhape of virtue, as fictions are always the more entertaining the nearer reſemblance they have to truth. Virtue is (3) ſo naturally graceful and charming, that men however wicked they are in themſelves, yet generally admire and commend goodneſs in others; and like the known character in the poet, they ſee what is better and approve it, tho' they follow what is worſe; or, as the apoſtle ſpeaketh to the ſame purpoſe, (Rom. VII. 15.) "what they would that they do not, but what they "hate that they do." The virtuous and good cannot be hated and perſecuted by the generality even of the moſt wicked and profligate, unleſs they are firſt blackened and defamed and repreſented to be what they really are not; as the primitive Chriſtians were ſometimes dreſſed in bear-ſkins, and then expoſed in the amphitheatre to be baited and devoured by the wild-beaſts. What villain (4) would commit villainy for any end, if he could obtain the ſame end as well without it as with it, even though he was ſure to go unpuniſhed for it? What wicked man is not even aſhamed to do wicked things before good men? What wicked father doth not deſire to have a virtuous good ſon? What wicked maſter doth not wiſh to have a faithful good ſervant? What man, even though he live

(4) Quis eſt enim, aut quis unquam fuit, aut avaritia tam ardenti, aut tam effrænatis cupiditatibus, ut eandem illam rem, quam adipiſci ſcelere quovis velit, non multis partibus malit ad ſeſe, etiam omni impunitate propoſitâ, ſine facinore, quam illo modo pervenire? Cic. de Fin. III. 11.

live the life of the wicked, doth not wiſh with Balaam (Numb. XXIII. 10.) to "die the death of the righteous, and his laſt end to be like theirs."

To give one inſtance more, and that the higheſt. Even God himſelf, the ſource and author of all excellence and perfection, we ſhould not love, we ſhould not adore but for his moral attributes. We may fear him for his power, we may admire him for his wiſdom, but we love him properly ſpeaking for his goodneſs. And if this was taken away from him, what would he be but an infinite evil?

It appears then by the effects that virtue is naturally beautiful and lovely. We were in the ſecond place to endevor to give ſome account why it is ſo, and muſt be ſo in the nature of things. The effects are obvious enough, they are ſeen and felt and known almoſt by every one; but the cauſes lie more remote, and require ſome ſearch and conſideration. I will endevor to be as plain as poſſible upon this head, without running into philoſophical enthuſiaſm and ſuch unintelligible notions as the Stoics and alſo ſome later writers have done in treating of this ſubject.

Virtue is acting according to the (5) eternal reaſon of things, and preſerving their natural agreement and diſagreement, their fitneſs and unfitneſs with one another. Now without doubt what is according to reaſon cannot but be approved by reaſon, and a beauty muſt neceſſarily reſult from the juſt proportion and conformity of actions to things and of things to actions. And if the beauty of a body be thought agreeable, how much more agreeable muſt be the beauty of a mind? If ſymmetry and order in inanimate things can pleaſe us, how much more pleaſant muſt be ſymmetry and order in human actions?

Again. Virtue is acting according to (6) truth, and in fact affirming things to be what they really are and denying them to be what they really are not: and there is no beauty without truth. No beauty in painting without true deſign; no beauty in architecture without true proportion; none in a perſon without true features; none in writing without truth of ſentiments; and ſo likewiſe no beauty in a life without moral truth, truth of actions. And if truth in ſpeculation be

(5) Clarke. (6) Woollaſton. (7) Cumberland.

the

the delight of all thinking minds, how much more delightful muſt be truth in practice? If there be ſuch a charm in truth, in dead numbers and mathematics, how much more charming muſt be living truth, truth of ſentiments and manners?

Once more. Virtue is acting according to the (7) laws of nature, and the chief law of nature is univerſal love and benevolence, and univerſal love and benevolence muſt needs appear amiable and engage the love of others in return. Love and friendſhip moſt uſually conciliate love and friendſhip: And if harmony in bare ſounds can ſo raviſh and engage the mind, how much more engaging muſt be ſweetneſs and harmony of temper?

Upon either, upon all of theſe hypotheſes virtue muſt neceſſarily appear beautiful and lovely. And this beauty is not like moſt other beauty all fancy, but is natural, being founded in the eternal reaſon and nature of things. As long as things continue the ſame, their ratio's and relations to one another will alſo continue the ſame. Things are not good or evil, becauſe they are enacted or forbidden by human laws: but they are enacted or forbidden by human laws, becauſe they are naturally and in themſelves good or evil. Nay more. (8) As in matters of ſenſe a thing is not viſible, becauſe it is ſeen; but on the contrary it is ſeen becauſe it is viſible: ſo likewiſe in matters of morality, a thing is not holy and juſt and good, becauſe God loveth and commands it; but God therefore loveth and commands it, becauſe it is in its own nature holy and juſt and good. In a word, things are beautiful or deformed as they are good or evil; but they are good or evil in their own nature, and therefore in their own nature too they are beautiful or deformed.

Thus have I endevored to give ſome account of the beauty of virtue both in its effects and in its cauſes. I have been the ſhorter upon each of theſe heads, that we might have the more time to apply the doctrin to ourſelves for our uſe and practice.

(8) Το ὁρωμενον, ᾳ διοτι ὁρωμενον γε εϛι, δια τϖτο ὁραται· αλλα τϖναντιον, διοτι ὁραται, δια τϖτο ὁρωμενον. Ουκϖν και το ὁσιον, διοτι ὁσιον εϛι, φιλειται ὑπο των θεων; αλλ' ᾳκ ὁτι φιλειται, δια τϖτο ὁσιον εϛι. Plato in Euthryphr.

Since then virtue is ſo naturally beautiful and lovely, this may ſerve as a powerful motive to engage us to the practice of it. In the eſtimation of right reaſon virtue is amiable in itſelf and is to be eſpouſed even without its dowry, without "the promiſe of the life that now "is and of that which is to come." The beauty of virtue alone could raiſe the wonder and applauſe and affections of the very Heathens: and how much more ſhould it inflame and captivate the hearts of Chriſtians, who are bleſſed as I may ſay with a fuller and nearer proſpect of it, having before them the moſt perfect rules and the moſt perfect example in the hiſtory and life of the holy Jeſus. Indeed to ſuch creatures as men the moſt powerful argument to the practice of virtue is the conſideration that God requires it at our hands, but the argument is ſtill improved by reflecting that God in requiring this requires nothing but what is the grace and ornament of our nature. (2 Kings V. 13.) "If he had bid thee do ſome great thing, wouldſt "thou not have done it; how much rather then when he ſaith to "thee, Waſh and be clean," acquit thyſelf handſomly, and do only what is becoming and beautiful?

For this end we ſhould take care to improve our natural moral taſte, that ſo we may have the nicer and more exquiſite ſenſe of the beauty and harmony of virtue, of the deformity and diſſonance of vice. Moſt men are ambitious enough to diſtinguiſh themſelves by a fine taſte in the polite arts and ſciences; but how much more ſhould we deſire to acquire a taſte in (what is of ſo much greater importance) life and manners? He certainly is the beſt Virtuoſo, who ſtudies the graces and perfections of virtue. The rudeſt and moſt barbarous of mankind are ſenſible of the extremes of virtue and vice, but let us aſpire after a more delicate diſcernment of every the leaſt degree of beauty in the one and blemiſh in the other. This no doubt would be highly preſervative of virtue, for one of true taſte cannot well bear to ſin againſt the rules of harmony and proportion. He could as ſoon be delighted with the moſt jarring grating ſound, with the moſt bitter nauſeous potion, with the moſt monſtrous ſhocking ſpectacle, as take pleaſure in any baſe action. The ſame elegance, that diſplays itſelf

itſelf in all his other ſenſations, would ſhine forth in his life and manners.

Let us not only endevor to improve this taſte, but alſo ſhow it by loving and encouraging virtue whereſoever and in whomſoever we find it: And let no parties in ſtate, no ſects in religion, no human conſiderations whatever induce us to gild and flatter wickedneſs though in a friend, to blacken and decry virtue and goodneſs though in an enemy. It is an abominable thing to ridicule and miſrepreſent what is naturally graceful and amiable; and the ſcripture denounceth a heavy woe upon all ſuch as are guilty in this kind: (Iſa. V. 20, 23.) "Woe unto them that call evil good and good evil, that put darkneſs "for light and light for darkneſs, that put bitter for ſweet and ſweet "for bitter, which juſtify the wicked for reward, and take away the "righteouſneſs of the righteous from him." In the prophet's account we ſee that it is as much ſinning againſt nature, ſinning againſt all ſenſe and taſte of every thing, "to call evil good and good evil," as "to put darkneſs for light and light for darkneſs, bitter for ſweet and "ſweet for bitter." It is not only an abuſe of language, but a corruption of ſenſe, and perverſion of nature. We have heard much of the *graces* in the letters of a (9) late conceited nobleman, but the graces which he recommends are no better than *hags:* for there can be no grace in baſe vicious actions, in debauchery or immorality of any kind. Away then with ſuch worſe than triflers. Let us (Rom. XIII. 7.) "give honor to whom honor is due;" and love always and praiſe always what is worthy and only what is worthy. What is good deſerves our commendation, and nothing elſe really doth ſo.

Laſtly let us not only love virtue in others, but endevor alſo to render it lovely in ourſelves, and not ſpoil what is naturally graceful by our ungraceful behaviour. There are ſeveral virtuous men, who yet by their ſtrange carriage and demeanour do the cauſe of virtue more hurt than good. Virtue in them is like a good picture in a bad light, or a jewel of high price ill-ſet; and even by doing good they ſcarcely pleaſe more than they offend by their manner of doing it. Virtue was

(9) Lord Cheſterfield.

never deſigned to be ſupercilious or preciſe or moroſe or ſullen; but on the contrary is naturally the moſt inoffenſive eaſy pleaſing behaviour; and is ſo far from ſavoring the leaſt of ill-breeding, that it is (in ſtrictneſs of ſpeech) the true good-manners. Virtue reflects grace upon us, and let us endevor to reflect grace again upon virtue, that ſo men "ſeeing our good works may be won over to go and do likewiſe." St. Paul himſelf was (1 Cor. IX. 22.) "made all things "to all men, that he might by all means ſave ſome;" and maketh it one of the diſtinguiſhing properties of his charity, (1 Cor. XIII. 5.) that it "doth not behave itſelf unſeemly." It is the character of our bleſſed Saviour himſelf, that he was (John I. 14, 16.) "full of "grace and truth," and "of his fulneſs have all we received, and "grace for grace." Therefore "worſhip the Lord in the beauty "of holineſs;" as David ſpeaketh (Pſal. XXIX. 2.) "Be not righ-"teous over much," as Solomon adviſes, (Eccleſ. VII. 16.) "neither "make thyſelf over-wiſe; (Prov. III. 21, 22.) keep ſound wiſdom "and diſcretion, ſo ſhall they be life unto thy ſoul, and grace to thy "neck:" And as St. Paul exhorts us; (2 Cor. VIII. 21.) "Provide "for honeſt things not only in the ſight of the Lord but alſo in the "ſight of men;" And (Tit. II. 10.) "adorn the doctrin of God "our Saviour in all things. Finally brethren, whatſoever things are "true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, "whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſo-"ever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if there "be any praiſe, think on theſe things; And the God of peace ſhall "be with you."

DIS-

DISSERTATION XLVII.

On CONVERSATION.

MAN is deſigned and framed by nature a ſociable converſable creature; he hath reaſon and ſpeech, which fit him and make him able; he hath appetites and neceſſities, which prompt him and make him willing, to join in ſociety. And it is one of the greateſt injuries to religion, to think that it baniſheth men from human converſe, or placeth its perfection in a deſert or a cloiſter. Our bleſſed Saviour, we read, often appeared in places of the greateſt reſort, and kept company with all ſorts of people: Even publicans, harlots and ſinners, enjoyed the benefit of his diſcourſe, and were made virtuous by his converſation. And without doubt to be religious is not to be unnatural. We may converſe, nay we muſt converſe; it is as neceſſary almoſt to the intellectual functions, as reſpiration is to the animal; but let our converſation be ſuch, as becomes men and becomes Chriſtians. To this purpoſe, there are ſeveral excellent rules given us in ſcripture, and particularly by St. Paul among the other moral ſentences in the cloſe of his epiſtles: but none is expreſſed with greater ſpirit and beauty, none is ſhorter and more comprehenſive than this addreſſed to the Coloſſians (IV. 6.) "Let your ſpeech be "alway with grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt." Upon this therefore we will inlarge in the following diſcourſe, firſt by explaining what it is to have our converſation "with grace ſeaſoned with ſalt," and then having explained the precept by offering in the ſecond place ſome arguments to preſs and enforce the practice of it. And let not ſuch a ſubject as converſation, a ſubject taken from common life, be thought below our notice and direction, ſince it was not below the bleſſed apoſtle's.

1. "Let

1. " Let your ſpeech be alway with grace ſeaſoned with ſalt." This evidently excludes all " corrupt communication," all " filthineſs " and fooliſh talking and jeſting, which are not convenient," and ſerve no wiſe end or purpoſe; which are ſo far from being worthy of a Chriſtian, that they are unworthy of a man; are ſo far from being agreeable to *grace*, that they are offenſive even to nature; proceed always from evil, and tend always to evil; ſhow depraved affections in the ſpeakers, and beget depraved affections in the hearers; and therefore ought not to be ſo much as " once named" among Chriſtians. It likewiſe excludes all clamor and calumny and evil-ſpeaking; for though ſometimes they may be ſeaſoned with *ſalt* enough, yet are they always without *grace*; are contrary to the manners of a Gentleman, and much more to the charity and benevolence of a Chriſtian; are the ſource of infinite calamities and evils in life, and to none more than to the perſon who dealeth in them; ſo true in the event are the words of Solomon, (Prov. X. 18.) " He that uttereth ſlander is a " fool." In ſhort, it excludes every thing that ſavors of irreligion, every thing that ſavors of folly; all profane wicked diſcourſe on the one hand, all empty trifling converſation on the other. But theſe are bare negative virtues, and the precept is poſitive, and injoins not only ſomething to be avoided, but ſomething to be done. Now to have our ſpeech *with grace* is to converſe with good nature and good manners; to ſpeak civily and courteouſly to every perſon; to talk always as becomes thoſe who partake of the " grace" of the goſpel, and profeſs themſelves the diſciples of the meek and holy Jeſus; " to let the " word of Chriſt dwell in us richly," as the apoſtle expreſſeth it in other places, (Col. III. 16. Eph. IV. 29.) and " that which is good " proceed out of our mouth to the uſe of edifying that it may mi- " niſter grace unto the hearers." To have our ſpeech *ſeaſoned with ſalt* is to make our diſcourſe as reliſhing and palatable as we can by wit and knowlege, in our words to ſhow forth the ſpirit of wiſdom and underſtanding, and upon all occaſions to aim as much as may be at a rational manly improving converſation. For *ſalt* is in almoſt all languages a metaphor for wiſdom and knowlege and the like; and ſo

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our Saviour calleth his apoſtles (Matt. V. 13.) " the ſalt of the earth," and in another place commands his diſciples to (Mark IX. 50.) " have " ſalt in themſelves and have peace one with another." It is farther obſervable, that the text recommends neither *grace* without *ſalt* nor *ſalt* without *grace*, but preſcribes both as neceſſary ingredients, that " we " may know how we ought to anſwer every man," as it is in the words immediately following. The truth is, neither of them is ſufficient alone, but both together will happily finiſh us for converſation; the one will teach us to converſe with good-nature, and the other with good ſenſe; the one will make us " harmleſs as doves," and the other " wiſe as ſerpents;" the one will temper wit with religion, and the other will ſet off religion with wit. We ſhall converſe like men and like Chriſtians, and ſhall ever be for promoting ſuch diſcourſe as conduceth to make us wiſer or better.

There are ſome perſons of ſo happy a nature, and of ſo ſuperior a genius, that whatever they do they do with a *grace*, and a moſt admirable vein of good ſenſe runneth through their whole converſation. Both what they ſay is inchanting, and their manner of ſaying it. They add weight to the moſt trivial ſubjects, dignity to the meaneſt; the very duſt and filings as I may ſay of their diſcourſe are gold; and there is ſomething far more entertaining and improving even in their looſeſt hints and amuſements than in the laborious long-winded harangues of others. Few indeed have pinions ſtrong enough to ſoar to theſe highths; this is a happineſs rather to be admired than equalled, to be deſired than attained. But ſtill it is the duty of all to exert their beſt endevors; and though perhaps they cannot converſe with as much grace and ſalt as they would, yet to converſe with as much as ever they can. For the precept is not given to this or that ſex, to this or that order of men in particular, but to all in general, " Let your ſpeech be alway " with grace ſeaſoned with ſalt." I know not well how it hath come to paſs, but with our modern fine gentlemen to talk any thing of learning is pedantry, to talk any thing of religion is hypocriſy or ſuperſtition. But it was otherwiſe among the ancients; their gardens, their walks, their banquets were frequently the ſcenes of ſuch converſation;

tion; and ſome of the moſt ſhining pieces of antiquity are the copies of theſe dialogues, drawn by the maſterly hands of the divine Plato, the polite Xenophon, and that great maſter of eloquence, Cicero. Nor were ſuch ſubjects the entertainment only of the men; the ſame ſpirit of virtue and good ſenſe diſcovered itſelf likewiſe in the women. It was Aſpaſia that taught Socrates eloquence. It was their mother Cornelia that trained up the Gracchi to be the wiſeſt men and greateſt orators of Rome. The Fathers tell us, that among the primitive Chriſtians it was uſual for their women as they ſat at work to diſcourſe of religion. In particular how do the virtues of Helena the mother of Conſtantine the great yet live in the hiſtory of Euſebius? how has Gregory Nazianzen celebrated the praiſes of his ſiſter Gorgonia and Nonna his mother? and how has St. Jerome immortalized the piety and learning and other accompliſhments of Paula and Euſtochium, who was called *the prodigy of the world?* In much earlier days there is the character of a good wife "whoſe price is above rubies" given by no leſs woman than the mother of a king; and of all that charming character no part is more charming than where it is ſaid (Prov. XXXI. 26, 27, &c.) "She openeth her mouth with wiſdom, and in her tongue "is the law of kindneſs." ("She openeth her mouth with wiſdom," that is in the words of St. Paul, her "ſpeech is ſeaſoned with ſalt, "and in her tongue is the law of kindneſs," that is her "ſpeech is "with grace"[1]) "She looketh well to the ways of her houſehold, and "eateth not the bread of idleneſs. Many daughters have done "virtuouſly but thou excelleſt them all: Favor is deceitful, and beau-"ty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, ſhe ſhall be praiſed." Such examples, it is to be feared, will ſooner be ridiculed by the generality than imitated in the preſent age; for ſo far from ſeeking the means and opportunities of imparting and receiving mutual light and improvement, the faſhion is to give in to ſuch diverſions and amuſements as cut off all poſſibility of a rational converſation. While we "were children," while the world was in the nonage of learning and philoſophy, we might "think as children," we might "ſpeak as

(1) Horace.

"children,"

"children," but now we "are become men," now the age is grown to maturity of knowlege, it is time to "put away childiſh things." Not that it either is or can be expected of us, that we ſhould talk always like oracles, that we ſhould ſay nothing but what is wiſe and ſententious. Dulce eſt deſipere in loco was the ſaying of a very (1) great wit. There are times and places when we may relax and unbend a little; and it is not meant that every word and ſentence, but that the general tenor of our converſation ſhould be to our improvement in knowlege or virtue. Amuſements ſhould be uſed only as amuſements, and not be made our buſineſs.

You have ſeen what it is to have our converſation "with grace "ſeaſoned with ſalt," and after having explained the precept it was propoſed in the ſecond place to offer ſome arguments to preſs and enforce the practice of it; though really it is to be lamented that there is any occaſion for arguments to ſhow that knowlege is better than ignorance, wiſdom preferable to folly, light to darkneſs.

Such ingenious converſation beſt anſwers the uſe and end of ſpeech, whereas the reverſe is a manifeſt abuſe of it. The two nobleſt faculties of man are ſpeech and reaſon; and theſe were deſigned as mutual aids and ornaments to each other, reaſon to direct his ſpeech, and ſpeech to ſhow forth his reaſon: and conſequently all rational diſcourſe is anſwering the end of nature, all other is perverting it. It may be impoſſible indeed to keep up converſation at all times alik It muſt ſometimes flag even among the moſt learned and ingeniou But how did the ancients uſually ſupply this deficiency at their enter tainments? They had what they called their *acroama*, ſomething read or recited to them; and they commented and made obſervations upon it. Now I would only leave it to be conſidered, if this was the faſhion now-a-days, whether it would not be a more rational way of paſſing time and entertaining one another, than the little low amuſements of parties at play. The elegant author of the life of Atticus informs us, that (2) there never was a ſupper at his houſe without ſome reading, ſo

(2) Neque unquam ſine aliqua lectione apud eum cœnatum eſt, ut non minus animo quam ventre convivæ delectarentur. Corn. Nep. Cap. 14.

that the minds of his gueſts were no leſs feaſted than their appetites. And Atticus was one of the politeſt and fineſt gentlemen of Rome, a character to which our modern great men are proud of being compared; and the moſt fulſome dedicator cannot flatter his noble patron more than by ſtiling him *an Atticus*. Let us therefore aſſert the dignity of our nature; let us exert the talents God hath given us to the end for which they were given us; he hath made us reaſonable creatures, and let us not by our remiſſneſs and negligence make ourſelves otherwiſe. Fools for want of natural capacity, fools for want of education, fools through ſome defect or infirmity of brain or body are to be pitied; but a fool of his own making is one of the greateſt monſters in nature.

Again. Such ingenious converſation certainly will be more beneficial to others, as well as more improving to ourſelves; but we may expect as ſoon to gather "grapes of thorns" or "figs of thiſtles," as any thing to come of folly, but folly. The company of learned ingenious men is the beſt ſchool of improvement. They do not beat about in the vulgar ways of thinking, in the common ordinary topics of converſation, but are continually ſtarting ſomething new. They are capable of adviſing in any difficulties, and (James III. 13.) "ſhow "out of a good converſation their works with meekneſs of wiſdom." They will not only communicate their knowlege, but will alſo ſharpen and exerciſe yours; "as (Prov. XXVII. 17.) iron ſharpeneth iron, "ſo a man ſharpeneth the countenance of his friend." A pedant may grow pale with poring over his books; but often more may be learned in an hour's converſation than in a day's plodding and reading. The true ſtate of the caſe is, the one cannot be complete without the other. Our reading will be of little uſe without converſation, and our converſation will be apt to run low without reading. Reading trims the lamp, and converſation lights it; reading is the food of the mind, and converſation the exerciſe. And as all things are ſtrengthened by exerciſe, ſo is the mind by converſation. There we ſhake

(3) ——. —— Fungar vice cotis acutum
Reddere quæ ferrum valet exors ipſa ſecandi. Hor.

off

off the duſt and ſtiffneſs of a recluſe ſcholaſtic life; our opinions are confirmed or corrected by the good opinions of others; points are argued, doubts are reſolved, difficulties cleared, directions given; and frequently hints ſtarted, which if purſued would lead to the moſt uſeful truths, like a vein of gold or ſilver that directs to a mine. Where the company is not ſo very improving, yet perhaps they may (3) perform the part of a whetſtone, and ſerve to ſharpen others though they themſelves have not the faculty of cutting. Queſtions are often aſked which put us upon thinking, and occaſion us to reflect upon what perhaps we ſhould not reflect by ourſelves. We improve in proportion as we inſtruct; and holding the light to others at the ſame time we light ourſelves. But all theſe advantages are forfeited and loſt by trivial trifling converſation. This depreſſes and contracts the mind, as much as the other opens and inlarges it. The wiſeſt of men ſhould certainly beſt underſtand the methods of attaining true wiſdom; and it is his aſſertion, (Prov. XIII. 20.) "He that walketh with wiſe men ſhall be wiſe." (1 Cor. XV. 33.) "Evil communications corrupt good manners," and it is equally true that fooliſh communications corrupt good ſenſe. Farther, good company and manly converſation will recommend us better to others as alſo be more pleaſing upon reflection to ourſelves. There is no criterion by which men are apter to frame an opinion one of another, than by the converſation they hold and the company they keep. They conclude and with reaſon conclude, that "out "of the fulneſs of the heart the mouth ſpeaketh," and ſuch as his diſcourſe is ſuch as his company is, ſuch is the man. As we regard our reputation therefore let us avoid all mean company, let us baniſh all empty converſation, which in reality is no better than "ſounding "braſs or a tinkling cymbal." The royal pſalmiſt often calleth his tongue his "glory," and let not our tongue be our ſhame. The friendſhip of ingenious men is fame; and (4) ſome of no little account in the world have deſired to have their names tranſmitted to poſterity by no other memorial than that they had ſuch or ſuch an illuſtrious

(4) Sir Fulke Greville of Sir Philip Sidney, Biſhop Hoadly of Dr. Clarke.

perſon for their friend. How many have been promoted to riches and honor only by frequenting of good company? Who is there almoſt that hath not raiſed his fortune, and obtained his preferment chiefly through the means of ſome or other of his acquaintance? The greateſt merit may languiſh and die in obſcurity, if there be not proper friends to patronize and advance it. It is in your own power to make yourſelf deſerving, but others muſt contribute to the making of you great. A man with friends will much ſooner riſe without merit, than a man of merit without friends. Nor will a rational converſation be only more agreeable to others, but will likewiſe be more pleaſing upon reflection to ourſelves. There is not half ſo much melody in the fineſt conſort of muſic, as in the harmony of friends entertaining and entertained, improving and improved by one another. But to a man of any taſte and ingenuity what ſatisfaction, what amuſement can there be in dull inſipid, in trifling impertinent converſation? what flowers are to be gathered in a garden of weeds? what honey is to be found in a hive of drones? There is nothing ſurely more tedious and tireſome than the preſence of thoſe, who if they do not talk are as no company at all, and are worſe than none if they do. Every wiſe man will agree with the ſon of Sirach, (Ecclus XXII. 14, 15.) "What is "heavier than lead, and what is the name thereof but a fool? Sand "and ſalt and a maſs of iron is eaſier to bear than a man without un-"derſtanding." On the other hand good company will not only pleaſe for the time, but leave a grateful reliſh behind them. It is certainly a very ſenſible pleaſure to reflect upon an evening ſpent in good converſation; but what pleaſing remembrance can there be of trifles and impertinence, from which one ariſeth neither better nor wiſer, and perhaps worſe and more ſtupid. If an evening's converſation (ſuch as evening-converſations uſually are) was taken down in writing, and preſented to each of the parties to be read at leiſure the next morning, I am perſuaded there is not a perſon of any tolerable ſenſe and ingenuity, who would not be overwhelmed with ſhame and

(5) Veſtræ quidem cœnæ non ſolum in præſentia, ſed etiam poſtero die jucundæ ſunt. Cicero Tuſc. Diſp. V. 35.

confuſion

confuſion of face, and earneſtly beg the paper to be ſuppreſſed, that it might never more riſe in judgment againſt them. That may be ſaid of the evening entertainments of wiſe men, which I think was ſaid of one of Plato's ſuppers (5); Their entertainments are doubly ſo, being likewiſe entertainments of the mind; they pleaſe not only over night, but the next morning too. The table-talk (6) of learned men in former ages hath been thought worthy to be tranſmitted to poſterity: but now there is (7) *no reverence of the table* as Juvenal expreſſeth it; and the beſt of polite modern converſation is, that it is not to be remembered.

Beſides we ſhould conſider what influence converſation has upon our morals and religion, that from idle diſcourſe to wicked diſcourſe is a natural and almoſt neceſſary tranſition. We cannot long continue at a ſtand. If we will not learn to talk better, we ſhall without learning it come to talk worſe. But the more we exert and exerciſe our talents, the more we improve them. And the converſation of the wiſe and good is (Prov. III. 18.) " as the ſhining light that ſhineth more " and more unto a perfect day."

Finally let us conſider that we ſhall be judged by our words as well as by our actions: And let us converſe in ſuch a manner now, as may juſtify us in the day of judgment. " Every idle word that men ſhall " ſpeak, they ſhall give account (Matt. XII. 36.) thereof in the day of " judgment:" and what then will be the portion of thoſe who ſpeak nothing and delight in nothing but idle words, and whoſe " inſtruction" itſelf, as Solomon ſaith, (Prov. XVI. 22.) " is folly." It is a memorable (8) ſaying in a ſermon of one of our moſt eminent divines, 'If it is imaginable that there can be any miſery greater than damnation, it is this to be damned for being a fool.' Indeed it ſeemeth impoſſible in the nature and reaſon of things, that ſuch mean ſpirits ſhould have any place in heaven; for their taſte and pleaſure being ſo far below the company and converſation of wiſe men, how can

(6) Luther's Colloquia menſalia. Scaligerana. Menagiana. Selden's table-talk.

(7) Hic nullus verbis pudor aut reverentia menſæ. Juvenal. Sat. II.

(8) Dr. South, Vol. 6. Serm. II. p. 404.

they

they ever be refind enough for the ſociety and intercourſe of " angels " and ſpirits of juſt men made perfect?"

And now to conclude. God hath made us reaſonable creatures, and it behoves and becomes us to converſe like reaſonable creatures, and more eſpecially thoſe who have the advantages of a liberal education, and are bred gentlemen and ſcholars. Trifles and vanity folly and impertinence are unworthy of a man, but are much more unworthy of a gentleman, and are moſt unworthy of a Chriſtian. Solomon is ſaid to have been the wiſeſt of men, and what were the principal topics of his converſation? Sacred hiſtory informs us, that they were chiefly points of natural and moral philoſophy; obſervations upon nature, poetry ſometimes for his amuſement, and proverbs containing the juſteſt and fineſt reflections upon human life: (1 Kings IV. 32, &c.) " He ſpake three thouſand proverbs, and his ſongs were " a thouſand and five: And he ſpake of trees from the cedar-tree " that is in Lebanon even unto the hyſſop that ſpringeth out of the " wall; he ſpake alſo of beaſts, and of fowl, and of creeping things " and of fiſhes; And there came of all people to hear the wiſdom " of Solomon, from all kings of the earth which had heard of his " wiſdom." Such was his diſcourſe, and ſuch was his reputation for ſuperior wiſdom; And if we would be wiſe, we muſt imitate the wiſeſt, ever remembring what the ſame Solomon hath ſaid, (Prov. XV. 7, 2.) " The lips of the wiſe diſperſe knowlege, but the mouth " of fools poureth out fooliſhneſs." Let us take another higher inſtance, of one who was wiſer and greater than Solomon, our bleſſed Saviour himſelf, (Col. II. 3.) " in whom were hid all the treaſures of " wiſdom and knowlege." As " he did no ſin," (1 Pet. II. 22.) ſo " neither was guile found in his mouth." " Never man ſpake like this " man," (John VII. 46.) was the teſtimony of his very enemies. In his younger years, (Luke II. 47.) " all that heard him were aſtoniſhed " at his underſtanding and anſwers." When he was more advanced to years of maturity, (Luke IV. 22.) " all bare him witneſs, and won- " dered at the gracious words, which proceeded out of his mouth." What theſe gracious words were, all tending to the glory of God and the

the edification of men, you ſee no leſs in his diſcourſes to his diſciples in private, than to the people in public places. In this as well as other things, (1 Pet. II. 21.) he " left us an example that we ſhould " follow his ſteps," ever bearing in mind what he hath declared, (Matt. XII. 37.) " By thy words thou ſhalt be juſtified, and by thy " words thou ſhalt be condemned." Wherefore (1 Pet. I. 15.) " as " he who hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of con- " verſation."

DISSERTATION XLVIII.

On abſtaining from all Appearance of EVIL.

SUCH is the purity and perfection of the Chriſtian morality, that we are required to abſtain not only from all the groſſer acts of ſin, but even " from all appearance of evil." (1 Theſſ. V. 22.) Some critics, it muſt be confeſſed, underſtand the precept otherwiſe, and tranſlate it that we ſhould abſtain from every *ſpecies* or *ſort* of evil. The word in the original ειδος is capable indeed of that interpretation; and it is our duty to abſtain from all ſins the leaſt as well as the greateſt. But it is not likely that the apoſtle ſhould quit the familiar ſenſe of the word for one more ſcholaſtic and philoſophical; and it is certain that Chriſtians are obliged, whether commanded here or not, to abſtain from all appearance of evil, and the apoſtle injoins as much in other places. " Whatſoever things are lovely," ſaith he, (Phil. IV. 8.) " whatſoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, and if " there be any praiſe, think on theſe things:" And again, (Rom. XII. 17.) " Provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men;" or as he elſe- where expreſſeth it, (2 Cor. VIII. 21.) " Provide for honeſt things " not

" not only in the ſight of the Lord but alſo in the ſight of men." The preſent tranſlation therefore, notwithſtanding this criticiſm, may ſtand as it is; ſince it is more according to the natural and obvious ſenſe of the words, and agrees ſo well with what the apoſtle injoins in other places, and beſides improves and raiſes the ſentiment higher than the other interpretation. For we muſt abſtain not only from the greateſt ſins, but from the leaſt; and not only from the leaſt ſins, but from the leaſt appearance of ſin. The life of a Chriſtian ought to be as much as poſſible, not only free from guilt but free from ſuſpicion: and in the farther proſecution of this ſubject it will be proper 1ſt to ſhow more particularly the meaning and extent of this precept; and 2dly to aſſign ſome reaſons for it; and 3dly to give ſome directions how we may " abſtain from all appearance of evil," concluding with ſome general reflections upon the whole.

I. As to the *meaning* and *extent* of this precept. I think there are only two caſes to which it doth not extend; there are only two exceptions to this general rule; and thoſe are when by abſtaining from the appearance of evil we ſhall commit any real evil or omit doing any good.

A fair reputation among men is very deſireable, but we muſt not to preſerve the form of godlineſs deny the power of it. It may happen in ſome ages and in ſome inſtances at leaſt that vice may be more faſhionable than virtue; but muſt I therefore by all means be in the faſhion becauſe men may reckon me cynical and ill bred if I am not? I will do all I can to gain the good eſteem of the world; but I muſt not for the ſake of that forfeit, what is dearer than that, my integrity. Among libertins a zeal for God though according to knowlege may be deemed bigotry and perſecution; but muſt one therefore ſink into the contrary extreme of an atheiſtical indifference? Among enthuſiaſts a ſober ſenſible chriſtian may be reputed no chriſtian; but muſt he therefore turn madman and methodiſt? In an age of luxury and extravagance a man of temperance and frugality may probably paſs for a covetous, penurious, ſordid wretch; but muſt he therefore, to avoid that imputation, affect an air of grandeur above his eſtate, and run

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in debt more than he can ever pay? In ſlaviſh countries a ſpirit of liberty may be branded for faction, and it may be counted little leſs than rebellion to obey God rather than men; but muſt therefore Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abednego fall down and worſhip the golden image, which Nebuchadnezzar the king hath ſet up? In factious times a moderate reaſonable man, a lover of peace order and good government may be traduced as a tool of power, a friend to deſpotiſm, an abetter of ſervility and dependence; but ſhould he therefore "uſe his liberty "as a cloak of maliciouſneſs, ſpeak evil of dignities," inflame "the "madneſs of the people," and promote "ſtrife and envying, confu-"ſion and every evil work?" We muſt (Rom. III. 8.) "not do evil "that good may come;" and much leſs only for the appearance of good.

Nay we muſt not only not commit any evil, to avoid the appearance of evil, but we muſt not omit doing any good, which was the other exception that I mentioned. A real good is ſurely not to be neglected for the ſake of an apparent one; for what would that be but to catch at the ſhadow, and thereby to loſe the ſubſtance? In a looſe and licentious age religion may too generally be condemned for hypocriſy, or ridiculed for ſuperſtition; but we muſt not therefore (Heb. X. 25.) "forſake the aſſembling of ourſelves together, as the man-"ner is" of too many among us; it would be ſad indeed if we could be laughed out of our duty to God by the moſt ſcornful raillery of men. Our bleſſed Saviour was reputed (Matt. XI. 19.) "a glut-"ton and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and ſinners;" but did he therefore abſtain from their company? no; "they that are "whole," ſaith he, (Mark II. 17.) "have no need of the phyſician, "but they that are ſick; I came not to call the righteous, but ſin-"ners to repentance." The apoſtles were every where repreſented as turbulent ſeditious perſons, as men who "exceedingly troubled cities "and turned the world upſide down;" but ſhould they therefore have deſiſted from preaching the goſpel? "Neceſſity was laid upon them," (1 Cor. IX. 16.) and "woe unto them if they had not preached the

" goſpel;" their hearing ill, and even their ſuffering ill, could not excuſe them from doing good.

But in all other inſtances ſo much regard is to be had to the opinion and eſteem of mankind, that we ſhould abſtain from every thing that may give the leaſt ſcandal or offenſe to others, though perfectly indifferent in itſelf. The reſpect that we owe to the world ought to oblige us, where there is no ſuperior obligation. We ſhould ſacrifice a little to their manners and cuſtoms, and not altogether to our own humor. A thing may be neither good nor bad in itſelf; there may be no crime in doing it, and no merit in forbearing it: but however though the thing be not wrong in itſelf, yet if it is generally reputed wrong, you ought to forbear it in compliance and compaſſion to the weakneſs of others. What is it that St. Paul ſaith (1 Cor. VIII. 4, &c.) " concerning the eating of thoſe things that are offered in ſacri-" fice unto idols? We know," ſaith he, " that an idol is nothing " in the world, and neither if we eat are we the better, neither if we " eat not are we the worſe;" but yet he adviſeth, " Take heed leſt by " any means this liberty of yours become a ſtumbling-block to them " that are weak; when ye ſin ſo againſt the brethren and wound their " weak conſcience, ye ſin againſt Chriſt; Wherefore" as he concludes, " if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no fleſh " while the world ſtandeth, leſt I make my brother to offend." A (1) royal pen was once pleaſed to write *A book of ſports*, to prove the lawfulneſs of plays and paſtimes after divine ſervice upon a Sunday, and this book was ordered to be read publicly by the miniſters in churches. At this time alſo ſeveral perſons, who perhaps deſpiſe the monarch, yet follow the example. And for argument's ſake we will allow that there is no more harm in playing upon the Lord's-day than upon another day: But then if we will allow that the thing is not evil in itſelf, yet you muſt allow, that it is commonly accounted evil, is contrary to the cuſtom of the country, is of pernicious example, and offenſive to the generality of proteſtants, and for theſe reaſons, if not for others, you ought in decency and good manners to refrain

(1) James the Iſt.

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from it. Thoſe who are the beſt bred and politeſt of mankind ſhould ſurely be the laſt to do any thing that may ſhock or ſtagger others. " We that are ſtrong," ſaith the apoſtle, (Rom. XV. 1, &c.) " ought " to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to pleaſe ourſelves; " Let every one of us pleaſe his neighbour for his good to edifica- " tion; for even Chriſt pleaſed not himſelf."

II. You ſee the meaning and extent of this precept, but you may aſk what obligations you are under to practiſe it; and therefore we are now in the ſecond place to aſſign ſome *reaſons* for it; and for method's ſake we ſhall reduce them under three heads.

1. We ſhould " abſtain from all appearance of evil" for the honor of *God* and *religion*. As it is not ſufficient to ſeem good without being ſo, neither is it ſufficient to be good without ſeeming ſo. It is not enough to be pure in heart, but we muſt make (Matt. V. 16.) " our light ſhine before men, that they may ſee our good works and " glorify our Father which is in heaven." Men cannot ſound our hearts, but judge by appearances; and how is it poſſible for them to be convinced of the influence and efficacy of our religion, unleſs it appear in our life and converſation? If they are induced even by appearances to think ill of us, they will be too apt to think ſo too of our religion; and therefore we ſhould endevor as much as we can to cut off all occaſion from thoſe who ſeek occaſion againſt us, that they may not wound Chriſtianity through our ſides. A good life reflects grace again upon religion, and doth honor to our calling. We ſhall never otherwiſe convince people that we are in earneſt, and win them over to our profeſſion. " Have" therefore (1 Pet. II. 12.) " your " converſation honeſt among the Gentiles," (for we may be ſaid in ſome meaſure to live among Gentiles too) " that whereas they " ſpeak againſt you as evil doers, they may by your good works which " they ſhall behold glorify God in the day of viſitation."

2. We ſhould " abſtain from all appearance of evil," *upon our own account*, to preſerve our *reputation*, to preſerve our *virtue*. To be a ſlave to the good opinion of the world, to do every thing with an eye to fame is a fooliſh and a fruitleſs taſk; but it is equally abſurd on the

other hand to do things needleſly which may hurt our reputation, and the appearance of evil will hurt it in many caſes perhaps as much as real evil. The world is too apt to condemn perſons and things without occaſion, and will they fail to do it when there is occaſion? Neither will real virtues atone for apparent vices, but apparent vices will rather ſully and obſcure real virtues. The very ſhadow of crimes will eclipſe the faireſt reputation; and by moving within the confines of vice we ſhall be in great danger of being drawn into it. Our natural horror of it will every day grow leſs and leſs, it will be more and more familiarized to our apprehenſions, and abandoning the appearance of goodneſs we ſhall in time abandon the reality. A decent behaviour is one of the greateſt guards of virtue, a hedge as it were and fence round about it to keep others from intruding; and none ever yet attempted to corrupt man or woman, who had not before obſerved ſomething or other in their behaviour to encourage it. The neglect of decency will ſoon be followed by the loſs of reputation, and the loſs of reputation by the loſs of virtue; for many will imagin, that they may as well enjoy the pleaſure as undergo the infamy; they will not be cenſured for nothing, and ſo commit thoſe very ſins of which they were ſuſpected becauſe they were ſuſpected. And thus only by appearing evil at firſt they become really ſo at laſt.

3. We ſhould "abſtain from all appearance of evil," out of *reſpect* to *others*, that we may not ſhock or offend them, that we may not draw them into ſin by our example. It is one of the duties that we owe to ſociety to give no offenſe in any thing. Good nature and good manners require it of us as men; and much more will charity oblige us to it as Chriſtians. Conſider what our Saviour hath declared of thoſe, who ſhall offend the leaſt and loweſt of their brethren; (Matt. XVIII. 6.) "Whoſo ſhall offend one of theſe little ones which believe in me, "it were better for him that a milſtone were hanged about his neck "and that he were drowned in the depth of the ſea." A decent behaviour is not only offenſive to none, but pleaſing to all; and approacheth neareſt to, what the Ancients ſo much deſired to ſee, virtue made viſible to human eyes. But by the appearance of evil you will

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not only ſhock or offend others, but may draw them into ſin by your example. If you, who are perſons in power and authority, ſeem to give countenance and encouragement to vice, will not your ſtamp and impreſſion make it paſs current almoſt through a whole nation? If you, who are men of ſuperior ſenſe and learning, practiſe things of evil report and eſtimation, will not others of inferior attainments imagin that they may lawfully do what they ſee you do before them? If you, who are perſons of eſtate and quality, take indecent liberties, will not thoſe of lower rank and condition think themſelves obliged to follow their betters, and be any thing rather than not be in the faſhion? And ſo by your means (1 Cor. VIII. 11.) "ſhall the weak brethren periſh for "whom Chriſt died." They cannot diſtinguiſh ſo exactly the bounds of what is lawful and unlawful, where virtue ends and vice begins; and your going ſo far may tempt them to go farther. (Rom. XIV. 16.) "Let not then your good be evil ſpoken of." (Gal. V. 15.) "Uſe "not liberty" ſo as to inſnare your brethren, "but by love ſerve "one another."

III. You ſee the reaſonableneſs of this precept, but ſtill you may aſk what are the beſt ways and means of putting it in practice; and therefore we are now in the third place to give ſome *directions* how we may "abſtain from all appearance of evil." Several directions and regulations might be offered; but there is no need to multiply inſtances, when two will be found as effectual as two hundred. All the reſt without theſe will be to little purpoſe, and theſe without any others will be ſufficient. The one is to uſe caution and circumſpection in our behaviour. It is an apoſtolical rule and neceſſary for all times, (Eph. V. 15.) "See that ye walk circumſpectly not as fools "but as wiſe." The other is to be really good, for that is the moſt effectual way to appear ſo; (Acts XXIV. 16.) "to have always a "conſcience void of offenſe toward God and toward men;" to be all that inwardly which we would appear outwardly, to meliorate our temper, and that will improve our manners; to ſatisfy our own mind and conſcience, and then we ſhall be the leſs apt to offend others; to pleaſe God in the firſt place, and then by the divine bleſſing we ſhall

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be moſt likely to pleaſe men. Neither will one of theſe fully anſwer the end without the other. The greateſt caution will not be ſufficient without real goodneſs. For nature will break through all diſguiſes. (2) You may by force and conſtraint expel it for a time, but it will return again. The moſt ſuttle hypocrit cannot be always upon his guard. Something or other will drop from him, or be drawn from him, that will betray what he is. Mere gilding cannot laſt always; it will be waſhed off, or wear away; and though perhaps it may at firſt deceive the eye, yet there is the weight and the ſound and other properties to ſhow that the counter is not gold. Neither will real goodneſs be ſufficient without proper caution. The innocence of the dove will make but a poor appearance in the world without ſomething of the wiſdom of the ſerpent. The leaſt blemiſhes appear more in a virtuous character, like ſpots in ermin. The beſt of reputations may be forfeited and loſt by a few indiſcretions. Our very virtues may appear like vices, and perhaps may degenerate into ſuch, if not conducted with prudence. (Matt. X. 16.) "Be ye therefore wiſe as ſerpents and harmleſs as doves." Adorn your virtue with prudence, and dignify your prudence with virtue. Then ſhall you both be good and appear good. Then ſhall religion do honor to you, and you do honor again to religion. In ſhort then ſhall you be, as St. James expreſſeth it, (I. 4.) "perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

And now to conclude with ſome general reflections upon the whole. From the whole tenor of this diſcourſe I think we may collect, that though the hypocrit and profane perſon are both very great ſinners, yet of the two hypocriſy is not ſo bad as open impiety and profaneneſs. The profane perſon tramples upon virtue and religion; the hypocrit ſubſcribes to their uſefulneſs and excellence; he would not ſo much affect the dreſs, if he did not think it becoming. The profane perſon giveth public offenſe, ſetteth a public ill example; the hypocrit ſinneth all to himſelf, ſetteth no ill example, giveth no offenſe, as long as he can keep himſelf undiſcovered. The profane perſon is not only bad, but moſt likely never to grow better, for what probability is there

(2) Naturam expellas furcâ licet, uſque recurret. Hor.

that

that he ſhould amend, who reſiſts and contemns all the means of grace and amendment? The hypocrit by aſſuming an air of ſanctity, by frequenting the Church, by hearing the word of God, may poſſibly ſometime be touched with a ſenſe of his duty; and by acting a part for a long time it may come to be natural to him at laſt. The hypocrit and the profane perſon may be both equally bad in themſelves; but ſtill it is ſomething, whatever we are, to appear decent, and not ſhock others with our behaviour. There is ſome ſort of merit, if we will not abſtain "from evil," yet in abſtaining from the "appear-"ance of evil."

What then ſhall we ſay of thoſe, who glory in their ſhame, and are ambitious to be thought even worſe than they really are. It is the part of theſe modern fine gentlemen to be above all modeſty and decency; to be guilty of ſeveral extravagances and ſeveral vices only for vain ſhow and oſtentation; to blazon their debaucheries as if they were heroical actions; and not contented with relating all which are true, to invent more which are falſe; to pretend familiarities with perſons whom they never knew; to boaſt of favors which they never received; and by telling their lies often, come to believe them themſelves at laſt. And to complete the character, they affect to behave with as little reverence to God as decency to men; deſire to be thought as looſe in their principles as their practice; eſteem themſelves never more witty than upon religion and thoſe who miniſter in religion; ridicule all private and public worſhip, or if ever they come to Church come with no more devotion than into a theatre; never invoke the name of God but as an expletive to their unmeaning diſcourſe, thunder it out in oaths and blaſphemies, in curſes and execrations, to wiſh damnation to themſelves or to others. (Jer. V. 29.) And "ſhall not God viſit for theſe "things? ſhall not his ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?"

This we muſt inſiſt upon, that it is our duty, though principally to regard ſubſtantial virtues, yet not to neglect appearances. The Chriſtian religion, if we will duly obſerve it, is the beſt ſchool of decency and good manners. It is an eſſential character of it, that "it doth "not behave itſelf unſeemly." A Chriſtian cannot conſiſtently with his

his principles do any thing that is ſhocking or offenſive, any thing that is rude or ill mannerly, any thing that is evil or hath even the appearance of evil: and if there are thoſe among us who behave otherwiſe, it is the fault of the profeſſors and not of the profeſſion. They therefore who are enemies to Chriſtianity are in effect enemies to decency; as Chriſtianity recommends and injoins what is juſt and true and becoming in our thoughts and words and actions more than any ſyſtem of morality or religion in the world. The Chriſtian religion is in Scripture often called *grace*. The wicked are in every ſenſe of the word *graceleſs*. Virtue is decency, and decency is virtue, or at leaſt the appearance of virtue. And a moſt perfect portraiture of all that is becoming and graceful we have in the hiſtory of the bleſſed Jeſus. None was ever ſo great, and yet ſo humble and condeſcending; none was ever ſo poor, and yet ſo meek and patient; none ever ſuffered ſo much ill, and yet did ſo much good; his preaching, his practice, his life, his death, all diſplayed "the beauty of holineſs;" ſo that the divine evangeliſt might very well ſay (John I. 14.) "We beheld his glory "the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and "truth." Study therefore his life, imitate his example. "Abſtain "from all appearance of evil; and the very God of peace ſanctify "you wholly, and I pray God your whole ſpirit and ſoul and body "be preſerved blameleſs unto the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. "The grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with you, Amen."

DIS-

DISSERTATION XLIX.

On the Prevalence of POPERY.

MANY and grievous complaints have been made of late of the growth and increaſe of Popery in this kingdom: but upon inquiry and examination it is found that the cry hath been greater than the occaſion. The number of Papiſts may indeed have increaſed in the metropolis by the concourſe of ſo many foreigners; their inſolence hath increaſed more through the mildneſs and lenity of the government not putting the laws ſtrictly in execution againſt them: but in the general their intereſt is rather declining than increaſing, as appears from the inſtances of ſome great and noble families leaving their communion, and coming over to the eſtabliſhed Church. But the great wonder of all is how ſuch a religion, ſo contrary to reaſon and ſcripture, could ever prevail in the world, endure through ſo many ages, and extend over ſo many countries, as to be called the *Catholic* church and religion. But it will abate all confidence on the one hand, and baniſh all ſcruples on the other, if we conſider in the firſt place the methods by which it was at firſt eſtabliſhed, and is ſtill maintained, and in the ſecond place what farther views Providence may have in it and what religious reflections it will adminiſter to us.

We ſhall have the leſs reaſon to wonder at the prevalence of that religion, if in the firſt place we conſider the methods, by which it was at firſt eſtabliſhed and is ſtill maintained. For it took its riſe in times of the greateſt ignorance and ſuperſtition, of the greateſt debauchery and wickedneſs, was advanced by little and little, was propagated ſometimes with all the cunning and dexterity, ſometimes with all the violence and cruelty in the world.

What wonder was it that tranſubſtantiation and the greateſt abſurdities ſhould meet with ſo favorable a reception among mankind, when the Goths and Vandals had rooted out all the old learning and planted ignorance and barbariſm in its ſtead: when a Mathematician was regarded with a ſecret kind of horror as a Magician, and many even of the higheſt dignitaries in the Church were ſo very illitterate as to be ſcarce able to read and much leſs to underſtand a chapter in the bible? What wonder was it that indulgences and the methods of being made righteous without righteouſneſs ſhould be ſo eagerly purſued, when the whole body had given up itſelf to work iniquity with greedineſs: when for a ſucceſſion of 50 Popes there was not one wiſe or virtuous man among them, and prieſts and people ſeemed to ſtrive which ſhould ſurpaſs one another in lewdneſs and debauchery of all ſorts? What tares might not the ſuttle enemy ſow among the wheat in that long night of ignorance and vice? And that ſuch was the ſtate of the Romiſh Church during ſeveral centuries we have the confeſſion (1) even of their own writers, and particularly of thoſe great cardinals and pillars of the Church Bellarmin and Baronius.

Even then Popery was not eſtabliſhed all at once. It was not the work of one man or of one age. It would be no difficult nor diſagreeable taſk to trace out the hiſtory of the diſtinguiſhing doctrins of popery, the particular time and place and manner of their introduction, how they ſprung and grew up by little and little, "firſt the blade, "then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear:" but ſuch a diſquiſition would lead us beyond the bounds which I propoſe to myſelf. I mean only to ſuggeſt ſome general reflections. The Romiſh doctrins would doubtleſs have been rejected with deteſtation and abhorrence, had they been propoſed in their full latitude at firſt; but they gained upon men by degrees and crept into the Church one after another almoſt ſecretly and inſenſibly. Thus the Pope having his chair in the capital city of the Roman empire, that gained him the reſpect of the minor biſhops, and that reſpect was by his flatterers improved into ſome kind of authority, and that authority ſwelled at laſt into the title

(1) See authorities cited by Archbiſhop Tillotſon in his rule of Faith, Part 3. Sect. 7.

of

of Univerſal Paſtor and Biſhop over all. Thus the doctrin of purgatory was the foundation of the ſcandalous trade of pardons and indulgences. Thus the worſhip of images gave riſe to tranſubſtantiation, and tranſubſtantiation to the worſhipping of the Hoſt and to the denying of the cup to the laity. Error begot error, and one abſurdity opened the way for another. The ſerpent having once gotten in his head, his whole body eaſily followed.

If by chance ſome few perſons were ſo learned as to be able or ſo honeſt as to be willing to put ſome check to theſe corruptions, they were either bribed or awed into ſilence, they were either won by fair promiſes and ſpecious pretenſions, or borne down by violence and perſecution. No people are ſo ſunk in ſtupidity but ſtill there are ſome or others cunning enough to bend them to their purpoſes; and the Biſhops and Cardinals of Rome have ever been noted for maſters of the moſt refined arts of policy, like true "children of this world" who are "wiſer in their generation than the children of light." Their new doctrins are all wonderfully calculated for promoting the temporal honor and profit of the clergy, and what devices therefore have they uſed, or rather what devices have they not uſed, to make them paſs current among men? How artfully have they inſinuated themſelves into the courts of Chriſtendom, and put the greateſt princes upon fooliſh and expenſive expeditions into the holy land, that ſo they might the better play their own game in their abſence? How many ſuppoſititious writings have they obtruded upon the Church? ſuch as Conſtantin's donation of the city of Rome and all the weſtern empire to the Pope, invented to ſupport his temporal power: and the Decretal epiſtles of the primitive Biſhops, counterfeited to eſtabliſh his ſpiritual authority; and many other precious forgeries, which have been coined in the mint of the Vatican? How many of the ancient Fathers have they wreſted and perverted to make them ſpeak their ſenſe, by inſerting ſome paſſages in their works and expunging others? And even the ſacred pages themſelves have not eſcaped being proſtituted and abuſed in the ſame manner and to the ſame wicked ends and purpoſes; as for inſtance leaving the 2d commandment out of the Decalogue,

and dividing the 10th into two to make up the number. How many miracles have they counterfeited, how many ghoſts have they raiſed, to give countenance and authority to their new doctrins? In a word, They have ſaints who never lived, martyrs who never ſuffered, authors who never wrote, and councils which never ſat, miracles which were never wrought, and cures which no body was the better for: and ſuch ſhrewd caſuiſts and able ſophiſters have they been, that they have diſtinguiſhed faith honeſty and truth from among men.

Where policy and the arts of intrigue could not prevail, there force was called in; there the princes of their communion were ſtirred up to arms; there wholſom ſeverities were applied, rods and gibbets, racking wheels and raging fires. It is the doctrin of their Church, that to root out and extirpate Heretics (ſo they call all who differ from them) is to do God good ſervice; and their practice has been altogether agreeable to their principles. For any one ever ſo little verſed in hiſtory knoweth full well, that moſt of the horrid plots and conſpiracies, moſt of the rebellions and treaſons, moſt of the civil wars and maſſacres, which for a thouſand years paſt have ſhook the quiet of the weſt, have been contrived, fomented, executed by the prieſts and bigots of the Church of Rome; and in what country of Europe have they not laid the ſcene of theſe bloody tragedies, in what age have they not acted and applauded them?

Is it not eaſy then to foreſee the ſucceſs of a new religion advanced in ſuch times and attended with ſuch favorable circumſtances, with dexterity and addreſs, with power and authority in the propoſers, with credulity and ignorance, with lazineſs and ſuperſtition in the receivers? How can men diſpute and inquire into the reaſon of things, when the treaſuries of knowlege, the holy ſcriptures, are locked up from them in an unknown tongue? How dare they, when a ſtanding inquiſition is open to receive them, and when they are taught that to doubt of any part of their religion is the ſuggeſtion of the devil and a damnable ſin? And then to men who either will not, or cannot, or dare not conſider, the Church of Rome hath many external advantages to recommend it. There is ſomething to ſtrike every eye, ſomething to gratify every palate.

palate. There is a great deal of pomp and pageant, jubilee and feaſting for the gay; mortification and abſtinence, pilgrimages and penances for the auſtere. The weak in faith may reſt ſecure on the Church's infallibility: and the confident may devoutly damn all the reſt of the world for Heretics and Schiſmatics. The rich may make to themſelves friends of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs by beſtowing part of their eſtate on a convent, or giving a large ſum of money to ſo many prieſts to ſay maſs for them: and the poor are relieved with all the oſtentation of charity, and are bribed and even *bought* into their communion.

We ſee then that there is nothing miraculous in the prevalence of that religion, nothing but what may eaſily be accounted for and reſolved into its proper cauſes. Let us not therefore murmur or charge God fooliſhly, as if his providence had been wanting to guard againſt the corruptions of the Church of Rome. Popery is only the fruit and conſequence of mens folly and wickedneſs, and the divine providence is no more to be taxed for permitting the one than the other. We may juſtly condemn the ſins of men, but we cannot juſtly impeach the wiſdom of God in this particular; eſpecially if it be conſidered in the ſecond place, What views Providence may have in it, and what religious reflections it will adminiſter to us.

" Righteous art thou, O Lord, when we plead with thee, yet let " us talk with thee of thy judgments: Wherefore doth the way of " the wicked proſper, wherefore are all they happy that deal ſo very " treacherouſly? Thou haſt planted them, yea they have taken root; " they grow, yea they bring forth fruit; thou art near in their mouth " and far from their reins." (Jer. XII. 1, 2.)—Now beſides that Popery muſt needs be that the ſcriptures might be fulfilled, as it hath been proved at large in the Diſſertations on the Prophecies, and particularly in the Recapitulation of the Prophecies relating to Popery: beſides that it is an inſtructive inſtance how far the beſt thing in the world Religion may be corrupted to the vileſt purpoſes, as it hath been manifeſtly ſhown under the preceding head: beſides theſe I ſay, it may be ſubſervient to ſome farther views and ends of Providence, particularly

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as being a trial of the Chriſtian's faith and ſtedfaſtneſs in his religion, as a juſt puniſhment of the ſins of men, as having happily proved to us the occaſion of a free exerciſe of reaſon in religion and put men upon the reading and ſtudy of the ſcriptures and fathers, as affording a ſtanding caution and example to all Chriſtians, as giving thoſe who are happy in the profeſſion of the pure religion of Jeſus a greater ſenſe of their happineſs.

A trial it is of mens faith and ſtedfaſtneſs in their religion, for it appears by all accounts, that more innocent Chriſtians have faln a ſacrifice to the zeal and bigottry of the Church of Rome, than to the fury of the Heathens in all their perſecutions; more men and women have been butchered for not tamely admitting tranſubſtantiation, that hard word and harder thing, than for refuſing to blaſpheme the name of Jeſus or bow before an idol. "Here is the patience and the faith of "the ſaints," ſaid St. John (Rev. XIII. 10.) upon a foreſight of theſe calamities, and we may ſay upon experience. How much brighter doth the Reformation ſhine for being ſealed with the blood of ſo many excellent Biſhops and Martyrs? The ſeed of the Church of England in particular, as well as of the Church of Chriſt in general is the blood of the martyrs. And now and always the Romaniſts give us an opportunity of exerciſing the greateſt prudence and charity, the greateſt forbearance and forgiveneſs toward them, of rendering good for evil and bleſſing for curſing, of making our virtue more conſpicuous here and our reward more glorious hereafter. "Here is the patience and "the faith of the ſaints." (Rev. II. 10.) "Be thou faithful unto "death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Nor is Popery only a trial of the faith and patience and other virtues of Chriſtians, but it may alſo be permitted by God in his juſt judgments for the puniſhment of the ſins of men, papiſts, and proteſtants and infidels. As to papiſts, it is but juſt in God (2 Theſſ. II. 10, 11.) to "ſend men ſtrong deluſions that they ſhould believe a lie, "when they receive not the love of the truth that they might be "ſaved." As to proteſtants I cannot but think Papiſts are deſigned to be to us, what the idolatrous Canaanites were to the children of Iſrael,

(Joſh.

(Joſh. XXIII. 13.) " ſnares and traps unto us, ſcourges in our ſides " and thorns in our eyes," to gall us whenever we turn aſide to the right hand or to the left. And if, having opportunities of knowing our Lord's will better, we do not better obey it; if, being happily reformed in our religion, we be not as much reformed in our lives, the virtuous, though miſtaken, men of that communion will riſe up in judgment againſt us and condemn us. As to infidels, it is certain that nothing hath given them greater ſcandal, or is a greater impediment to their embracing of Chriſtianity, than popery. For inſtance how are the Jews ſcandalized at the worſhip of images? What an offenſe is tranſubſtantiation to the very Heathens? ' Quandoquidem ' Chriſtiani comedunt quod adorant, ſit anima mea cum philoſophis.' Since the Chriſtians eat their God, ſaid Averroes the Arabian philoſopher, I deſire to continue a philoſopher. God never propoſeth a revelation to mankind without light and evidence enough and enough to convince reaſonable minds, but ſtill there is always room enough left for the unreaſonable to cavil and find fault. Popery is matter of exception to prejudiced men, who lay the faults of Chriſtians on Chriſtianity itſelf, and for that reaſon may be permitted by God, to blind the eyes which will not ſee, and to darken the underſtandings which will not underſtand.

Beſides its being a trial of men's faith, and a puniſhment of their ſins, it hath happily proved *to us* the occaſion of a free exerciſe of reaſon in religion, and hath put men upon the reading and ſtudy of the ſcriptures and fathers. Moſt men have a Pope in their belly, as Martin Luther was wont to ſay; moſt men are infallible to themſelves, and are for having their own interpretations of ſcripture received as authentic, their own creeds and ſyſtems as the only true and orthodox, and revile and perſecute all who diſſent from them. This is the fault more or leſs of moſt, (I had almoſt ſaid of all) the different ſects and parties of Chriſtians. But we ſee into what abſurdities an implicit faith betrays men in the Church of Rome, and what we condemn in them, we cannot ſurely approve and encourage in ourſelves or others. Perhaps our liberty of propheſying hath been carried ſomewhat too far, and hath

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crumbled proteſtants into ſo many ſects and diviſions: but it is much better that there ſhould be ſome little differences among men which is the beſt way, than that the "blind ſhould lead the blind, and all fall "into the ditch." The controverſies which are ſo hotly agitated between the Church of Rome and other Churches have put men upon inquiring into the grounds and reaſons of their religion, more than perhaps they would otherwiſe have done. The Church of Rome endevors to ſupport moſt of her new doctrins by teſtimonies of ſcripture and citations from the ancient fathers and councils; and this hath made it neceſſary for men to compare texts with texts, fathers with fathers, councils with councils, in order to find out their true and genuin ſenſe and meaning. The Church of Rome pretends to derive her doctrins and practices in a continual ſucceſſion from the very days of the apoſtles; and this hath luckily promoted the ſtudy of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, and obliged men to ſearch into ancient writings and records, to trace out the preciſe time wherein ſuch or ſuch a corruption ſtole into the Church. Indeed we do not aſſert, that liberty of conſcience and the knowlege of the ſcriptures are the natural effects and conſequences of Popery: Popery naturally tendeth to ſubvert and deſtroy, but by the bleſſing of God it has in ſome places occaſionally advanced both the one and the other.

It likewiſe affords a ſtanding caution and example to all Chriſtians; a caution to beware of the like errors and ſuperſtitions, an example to ſtir us up to the like diligence and application in our profeſſion, as the members of the Romiſh communion have in theirs. What is more likely to prevent our making ſhipwrack of faith and a good conſcience than to ſee the rocks and ſhelves upon which the Church of Rome hath ſplit before us? What is apter to provoke a zeal for God according to knowlege than to ſee and feel the ſad effects of a zeal for God according to ignorance? Preſent and ſenſible evils affect us more than the relation of paſt or the denouncing of future: And it is (2) right to be taught even by our enemies, to be as earneſt and hearty in a good cauſe, as they are in a bad one.

(2) ——Fas eſt et ab hoſte doceri. Virg.

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This farther uſe, no doubt, was deſigned by providence to be made of the ſtate of the Church of Rome, that from the evils which thoſe of that communion ſuffer we may be taught to prize the good things which we enjoy. Our happineſs appears the more exquiſite upon the compariſon, as diamonds receive a luſtre from their foil. In the Church of Rome the people are diſcouraged from reading the Bible; what reaſon then have we to be thankful, who "from children have "known the holy ſcriptures?" In the Church of Rome prayers are offered up to God in an unknown tongue; what a privilege then and comfort is it to us, "to pray with the ſpirit and to pray with the "underſtanding" alſo? We ſhould be apt to grow ſomewhat forgetful of our own happineſs, if it was not for the miſeries of others before our eyes. The proſpect of a ſtorm at ſea maketh a man hug and bleſs himſelf that he is ſafe at land (3). A ſenſe of Popiſh ſlavery inhanceth the value and doubleth the reliſh of Chriſtian liberty.

But to conclude, though the Church of Chriſt be militant here on earth, yet it will one day be triumphant in heaven. Though it be ſullied with error and ſuperſtition here, yet hereafter it will be (Eph. V. 27.) "a glorious Church, not having ſpot or wrinkle or any ſuch "thing." Popery is now viſibly upon the decline even in popiſh countries. The pope himſelf from a great potentate paramount to all is ſhrunk into a petty prince, ſtript of ſeveral of his dominions; from lording it over God's heritage and dethroning and depoſing kings and emperors at pleaſure, he now lieth at the mercy of the greater powers of Europe. He would not otherwiſe have diſbanded his faithful life-guards, the Jeſuits, which is likely to be followed by the diſſolution of the other religious orders. Popiſh princes begin now to taſte the ſweets of ſeiſing on the lands and revenues of eccleſiaſtics. Their religion is daily loſing ſomething of the force and influence, which it had ſome centuries ago. The power of the inquiſition is reſtrained and limited within narrower bounds. Their prieſts and confeſſors are no longer held in the ſame veneration among the lower people; and among the higher ranks it is to be feared there is little or no religion

(3) Suave mari magno, &c. Lucret.

at all. The men of letters affect to be called *philoſophers*, meaning deiſts or atheiſts, that is, " profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, " they become fools." In ſhort the ſtate of affairs every where is ſuch, that they ſeem evidently to be tending towards the gradual accompliſhment of the prophecies in the ſubverſion of the Roman religion. The great ſcarlet whore will finally be deſtroyed, and the ſpouſe of Chriſt preſented to him, (Rev. XIX. 8.) " arrayed in fine linen " clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteouſneſs of ſaints." All doubts and differences concerning theſe myſterious diſpenſations will then be fully cleared up and ſatisfied, and the ſaints of God will celebrate the rectitude of the divine proceedings, as they are repreſented in the Revelation, ſaying (ver. 1, 2.) " Alleluia, Salvation, and " glory, and honor, and power unto the Lord our God; For true " and righteous are his judgments, for he hath judged the great " whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath " avenged the blood of his ſervants at her hand." Wherefore (XVIII. 4, 5.) " Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of " her ſins, and that ye receive not of her plagues: For her ſins have " reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities."

DISSERTATION L.

On the Nature and Condition of Angels.

WHOEVER looketh abroad into the world, cannot but obſerve, that there is a wide difference of underſtanding between man and man; and this difference ariſeth chiefly from the different ſphere of thought, in which the one and the other is uſually employed. Little and low objects depreſs and enervate our faculties, contract our views

views every day more and more, and by degrees bring a kind of lethargy upon the mind: but great and ſublime ſpeculations raiſe and ennoble our natures, inlarge the powers and capacities of our ſouls, and afford at once the moſt exquiſite and refined pleaſure, the moſt ſolid and laſting advantage. To dwell wholly on the former is burying our talent in a napkin and degrading ourſelves to the rank and level of the beaſts that periſh: To exerciſe ourſelves in the latter is properly our work as we are thinking reaſonable creatures, and as we are made in the image of God, is raiſing ourſelves to ſome likeneſs and reſemblance with God.

For this reaſon I have choſen to point our thoughts at this time on the nature and condition of angels; a ſubject very noble and entertaining in itſelf, and very fruitful of good conſequences. Mr. Hooker (1) a little before his death, appearing in deep contemplation, and not inclinable to diſcourſe, was aſked what were his thoughts, to which he replied, "That he was meditating the number and nature of angels, and their bleſſed obedience and order, without which peace "could not be in heaven; and oh! that it might be ſo on earth!" Soon after which words he expired, and entered into that bleſſed ſociety of angels and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect. Such were the dying thoughts of this great and good man, and without doubt they were often his living thoughts too; and it can be no diſparagement for the wiſeſt man upon earth to think like him. Now what I have to deliver upon this ſubject will be contained in ſix propoſitions: and leſt what is here advanced ſhould otherwiſe ſeem too ſpeculative and abſtract, I ſhall as I go along from each head deduce ſomething that may direct and influence our practice.

I. There are ſuch beings as thoſe we call angels, inviſible intellectual beings ſuperior to man. This propoſition may eaſily be made good by numberleſs inſtances derived from both the Old and New Teſtament. The five books of Moſes ſufficiently evince it, thoſe books which the Sadducees themſelves admitted. We farther learn from the ſacred writings, that of theſe angels there is an "innumerable com-

(1) See the concluſion of his Life by Iſ. Walton, p. xl.

"pany," (Heb. XII. 22.) and that there are different degrees of them, "angels and archangels." But that there are ſuch beings is not only the doctrin of ſcripture, but was likewiſe the opinion of the wiſeſt philoſophers, and moſt civilized nations from the beginning of the world to this day. And beſides human and divine teſtimonies, we may I think allege very powerful reaſons to ſupport and ſtrengthen our aſſertion. For conſidering the nature of man, we cannot think it very likely that he ſhould be the maſter-piece of the whole creation: and he who can think otherwiſe muſt entertain a very high opinion of himſelf, or a very mean one of the workmanſhip of God almighty. Man indeed is a moſt glorious being compared with the other tenants of this lower world; but when we reflect on the ſurpaſſing excellence of the firſt cauſe, how can we ſuppoſe that there are not more excellent effects? When we contemplate the majeſty of the great Lord of heaven and earth, how can we fondly imagin that he has no better ſervants nor abler miniſters? Who can ever be perſuaded that ſuch little impotent agents are the greateſt work of almighty power; or that ſuch finite narrow underſtandings are the nobleſt productions of infinite wiſdom? Who can ever believe that ſuch wicked degenerate creatures enjoy the largeſt communications of the divine goodneſs; or that ſo much imperfection is the beſt image and reſemblance of all-perfection?

We ſee things aſcend by gentle and eaſy ſteps from the loweſt ſpecies of beings towards man, and why ſhould we not think they riſe in the ſame manner from man towards the infinite perfections of God? Let us take the moſt dead inorganical piece of matter, and we ſhall yet find ſome vegetables raiſed but one degree above it: others again have a nicer frame and texture than theſe, and yet riſe ſhort of the beauty of others: and ſo on; till we come to ſome vegetables which ſeem to have as much ſenſe as ſome animals, and which by a peculiar name are called *ſenſitive plants*. The like gradual improvement runneth through the animal world; for ſome we may obſerve with only one or two ſenſes, ſome with four, and ſome with all the five; and even ſome beaſts are in cunning and ſagacity very little, if at all inferior to ſome of our own kind. The ſame proportion holdeth likewiſe

wiſe among men; whoſe capacities we may perceive are varied in almoſt innumerable inſtances, from the firſt dawn and twilight of human reaſon and underſtanding in idiots and ſavages to their full brightneſs and meridian luſtre in the men of great parts and comprehenſion. Thus things flow from a point, an almoſt nothing, and riſe by little and little from dead matter to life, and from life to ſenſe, and from ſenſe to underſtanding: and who can ſet the preciſe bounds, where any one of theſe endeth, and the next to it begins? Who can exactly determin which is the higheſt of irrational, and which the loweſt of rational creatures? Now as this regularity, as this order reigneth in the viſible world below us; it is reaſonable to conclude that it extends itſelf likewiſe to the inviſible world above us: as the ſcale of beings riſeth higher and higher to the greateſt of men, it is probable that it ſtoppeth not here, but is like Jacob's ladder, reaching from earth to heaven, with the angels of God aſcending and deſcending on it. This we ſhall be the more inclined to believe, eſpecially if we conſider, that the diſtance between God and man is capable of admitting infinitely more ranks and orders of beings, than the diſtance between man and the pooreſt atom in nature.

Beſides it is by no means probable, that the heavens, and thoſe vaſt bodies the heavenly luminaries, are deſtitute of all inhabitants; but being in themſelves much nobler than our earth, they have doubtleſs more noble beings to poſſeſs them. Our earth is as nothing in compariſon of the worlds, which every way ſurround it: and can we ſuppoſe, that this ſpot only is inhabited, and that all the reſt of nature is a wild uncultivated deſert? Can we fancy that this great building of the univerſe, the larger part of which lieth beyond our view and even beyond our imagination, was made for us little creatures *men*, and that there are no ſuperior beings to take up its higher rooms and more ſpacious apartments? God never maketh excellent things for little and mean purpoſes; and can it reaſonably be ſuppoſed, that ſo many ſyſtems and worlds upon worlds were formed only to twinkle upon us, or to be faintly diſcerned through a teleſcope? By the help of glaſſes we diſcover every green leaf to ſwarm with innumerable inhabitants, every drop

drop of water to be peopled with myriads of living and moving creatures: and can we imagin ſuch great and glorious bodies as the ſtars to be mere void and empty ſpaces? But if we can groſsly imagin that the ſtars are mere blanks and voids in the creation; yet what muſt we think of heaven and the heaven of heavens, where the King of kings more eſpecially keepeth his court, and manifeſts his immediate preſence? Are there no heavenly and divine beings to ſurvey the wonders of thoſe places? and where his glory is moſt diſplayed, is it leaſt perceived there? In a word, to the ear of reaſon God and man, heaven and earth proclaim this truth: God is too great to appear to the beſt advantage in man; man is too mean to be the firſt-born and moſt excellent of the ſons of God: and the ſame proportion earth beareth to heaven, the ſame without doubt muſt the terreſtrial beings bear to the celeſtial.

Thus have we proved our firſt propoſition from reaſon, and from teſtimonies both human and divine. What practical inferences may we now draw from it?

We may from hence learn to correct all vain and extravagant notions of our own worth and abilities, and not to think of ourſelves more highly than we ought to think. For what are all the learned, all the wiſe, all the mighty of this world, compared with angels and archangels? How are all human excellencies ſwallowed up and loſt in their ſuperior luſtre? Inſtead of looking with contempt on thoſe beneath him, let a man but contemplate thoſe heavenly beings above him; and he will find greater reaſon to proſtrate himſelf with ſhame and confuſion of face, than fondly to value himſelf upon any little marks of diſtinction, which he may enjoy over his fellow-creatures.

Again. We may from hence alſo be invited to magnify and adore the goodneſs of God, that is not confined to theſe higher ranks of beings, but extends itſelf to the loweſt of the ſons of men. So little a creature as man would be overlooked in this univerſality of beings by any thing leſs than omnipreſence and omniſcience. We may therefore very fitly ſing the ſong of the divine pſalmiſt; (Pſal. VIII. 5, 6, 9.) "What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the ſon of man

"that

" that thou viſiteſt him? Thou haſt made him lower than the an-
" gels," and yet " thou haſt crowned him with glory and honor:
" O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!"
More particularly let us praiſe his holy name for that myſtery of love and condeſcenſion, the incarnation of the Son of God; for his paſſing by theſe glorious beings, and ſubmitting to become man: (Heb. II. 14, 16.) " Foraſmuch as the children are partakers of fleſh and blood,
" he alſo himſelf likewiſe took part of the ſame: For verily he took
" not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the ſeed of
" Abraham."

II. The angels are immaterial beings or ſpirits. This doctrin is clearly delivered in ſcripture. " God maketh his angels ſpirits," ſays the pſalmiſt. (Pſal. CIV. 4.) The apoſtle underſtands it in the ſame ſenſe, (Heb. I. 7.) " Of the angels he ſaith, Who maketh his angels
" ſpirits:" And without ſeeking any farther the following words of the apoſtle are a plain proof of our poſition, (ver. 14.) " Are they not
" all miniſtring ſpirits?" where every one knoweth that the interrogation is equivalent to a ſtrong and peremptory aſſertion; as if the divine author had ſaid, " They are all miniſtring ſpirits."

Nor is reaſon altogether ſilent in the caſe. For man is evidently compounded of ſoul and body: and as body is the chief or only ingredient in ſome beings, ſo it is moſt highly probable, that in others again the chief or only ingredient is ſpirit. This ſeemeth ſtill the more probable, becauſe it is ſomewhat analogous to the other works of nature. There are ſome fiſhes who fly in the air, and ſome birds who inhabit the waters. Amphibious animals live at ſea and at land; and ſome creatures are in one part birds, in one part beaſts. In like manner we may look upon man, as a kind of mean proportional between material and immaterial beings; not merely the one, nor merely the other, but partaking of the nature of both; in his ſoul allied to the angels of heaven, in his body akin to the worms of the earth.

As the angels are immaterial ſubſtances, they muſt of conſequence be naturally immortal, they muſt excel in wiſdom and ſtrength, they muſt

muſt be all light, all life. And theſe deductions are no leſs conſonant to the word of God, than agreeable to the dictates of reaſon.

Whether the angels are perfectly pure ſpirits, or (as many have imagined) cloathed with ſome fine etherial vehicle, I ſhall not inquire. It is moſt probable that they are cloathed with ſome fine aerial or etherial vehicle, and that the only perfectly pure ſpirit in the univerſe is God. It is probable too that this aerial vehicle they have a power of dilating or contracting, of rarifying or condenſing ſo as to aſſume bodies upon occaſion, as when they made their appearance to the holy men of old times. They not only appeared in bodies, but alſo performed bodily functions and operations. For we read (Gen. XXXII. 24.) that one of the angels "wreſtled" with Jacob, and two "ate" with Lot at one time, (Gen. XIX. 3.) and three with Abraham at another. (Gen. XVIII. 8.) How the Jews underſtood theſe things we may learn from what the angel ſays in that ancient apocryphal book of Tobit, (XII. 19.) "All theſe days did I appear unto you, but I did neither eat nor "drink, but you did ſee a viſion." By what means of condenſation and rarifaction theſe bodies were aſſumed and laid aſide we cannot pretend to ſay, but only that for the time they appeared as real bodies. It is farther obſervable, that theſe heavenly miniſters, though ſometimes ſent to women, as to Manoah's wife and the virgin Mary, (Judg. XIII. 3. Luke I. 28.) never yet (as far as we read in ſcripture) took upon them the form of women; but uſually appeared as men, and as young men: And this form, we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, was aſſumed, as being the moſt proper and expreſſive emblem of their activity and diſpatch, of their vigor and immortal youth; as their appearing for the moſt part in *white* was deſigned, I conceive, to ſignify and repreſent to us their ſpotleſs ſtate of innocence and glory: for "the fine linen, clean and white," ſays St. John, (Rev. XIX. 8.) "is the righteouſneſs of ſaints." But this by the way.

What uſe may we now make of this propoſition? It may inſtruct us to be modeſt and humble in our inquiries concerning the angels, and rather ſilently to admire them, than inquiſitively to pry into their ſtate and manner of exiſtence. We know not the frame and conſti-

tution

tution of thoſe ſpirits within us: and how then can we define the nature and operations of thoſe heavenly ſpirits above us? We may ſafely go ſo far as the light of revelation directs us; but when we would proceed one ſtep farther, we are quite loſt in clouds and darkneſs. The very names which we uſe in our diſcourſe and reaſonings about them are ſo many arguments of our ſhort-ſightedneſs and ignorance: for by *ſpirit* we mean only ſomething that is not matter, and *angel* ſignifies no more than a meſſenger. How intolerable therefore is the pride and arrogance of thoſe, who "vainly puffed up by their fleſhly minds," as the apoſtle ſpeaketh, (Col. II. 18.) "intrude into thoſe things "which they have not ſeen," which they cannot ſee! Here one cannot forbear to take notice more eſpecially of the Schoolmen, thoſe ſpiders in divinity (as I may call them) who have ſpun a thouſand intricate webs out of their own brains, with neither reaſon nor ſcripture to ſupport them. Had they with St. Paul been caught up into the third heaven, they could not have given a more exact regiſter of the celeſtial hierarchy, nor have been more particular in their accounts, more peremptory in their determinations. But ſuch was the vanity of theſe men, that they had ſomething to ſay upon every thing, becauſe they would have it thought, that there was nothing but what they perfectly underſtood. As for ourſelves, let us take to ourſelves the good advice of the wiſe ſon of Sirach: (Ecclus III. 21, &c.) "Seek "not out the things that are too hard for thee, neither ſearch the "things that are above thy ſtrength: But what is commanded thee, "think thereupon with reverence; for it is not needful for thee to ſee "with thine eyes the things that are in ſecret: Be not curious in un-"neceſſary matters; for more things are ſhowed unto thee than men "underſtand: For many are deceived by their own vain opinion, and "an evil ſuſpicion hath overthrown their judgment: Without eyes "thou ſhalt want light; profeſs not the knowlege therefore that thou "haſt not."

III. The angels are created beings, created by the Son of God. It is matter of ſtrict demonſtration, that there is but one independent and ſelf-exiſtent being; and conſequently all other beings are created

and dependent. Beſides the ſcriptures are very clear and copious in this point. Of many paſſages to this purpoſe I will cite only one out of the Old Teſtament, and one out of the New. The former is in the book of Nehemiah; (IX. 6.) "Thou, even Thou art Lord "alone, thou haſt made heaven and the heaven of heavens with all "their hoſt, the earth and all things that are therein, the ſeas and "all that is therein, and thou preſerveſt them all, and the hoſt of "heaven worſhippeth thee." The latter is in St. Paul's Epiſtle to the Coloſſians; (I. 16, 17.) "By him" (that is by the Son of God) "were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, vi-"ſible and inviſible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or prin-"cipalities, or powers; all things were created by him and for him; "And he is before all things, and by him all things conſiſt."

That the angels are created beings, there is no doubt: the queſtion is, when they were created. The ancient fathers, both Greek and Latin, before St. Auguſtine's time, thought that the angels were created before the world; but the generality of modern divines are of opinion, that they were a part of the εξημερον or ſix days creation. And for this opinion they think they have ſufficient foundation in the word of God. For after Moſes hath at large given an account of the crea-tion, he recapitulates the whole in theſe words; (Gen. II. 1, 2.) "Thus the heavens and the earth were finiſhed, and all the hoſt of "them; And on the ſeventh day God ended his work which he had "made, and he reſted on the ſeventh day from all his work which "he had made." Here it is ſaid that not only the heavens and the earth were finiſhed in ſix days, but likewiſe "all the hoſt of them;" and Moſes hath elſewhere (Gen. XXXII. 2.) ſtiled the angels "God's "hoſt:" and on the ſeventh day God reſted from his work, "from all "his work which he had made." To the ſame purpoſe we are taught in the ſecond commandment, (Exod. XX. 11.) that "in ſix days the "Lord made heaven and earth, the ſea and all that in them is, and "reſted the ſeventh day." Not only heaven, but "all that is in "heaven" was made within the ſix days. If Moſes did not mean to ſpeak only of the viſible heavens and earth, if the higheſt heavens and

angels

angels were alſo comprehended in this general deſcription, the conſequence is plain, that the angels were created ſome time or other within the ſix days: and if ſo, then I think little doubt can remain that they were created on the firſt day before God created the earth. Thus much at leaſt, I conceive, is implied in the book of Job, where the angels are introduced as beholding and celebrating the works of creation. "Where waſt thou," ſaith God to Job, (Job XXXVIII. 4, &c.) "when I laid the foundations of the earth? when the morning "ſtars ſang together, and the ſons of God ſhouted for joy?" In like manner the pſalmiſt ſpeaketh of the works of God; (Pſal. CIV. 4, 5.) "Who maketh his angels ſpirits, his miniſters a flaming fire:" and then immediately follows, "Who laid the foundations of the earth, "that it ſhould not be removed for ever." It is indeed reaſonable to think that God ſhould not make the world without a witneſs, without ſome intelligent beings to behold his works, to ſing his praiſes together, and ſhout for joy. And probably the diviſion of the creation into "ſix days" was made in condeſcenſion to their capacities, that ſo they might the better ſurvey the leiſurely production and formation of things: whereas it was as eaſy for omnipotence to have made the world or ten thouſand worlds in an inſtant as in ſix days.

But not to dwell on theſe ſpeculative niceties, let us ſee what practical deductions we can make from this head.

1. Then, we muſt not worſhip the angels. For the angels are creatures, and no creature is to be worſhipped by us; it being a principle of natural as well as of revealed religion, (Matt. IV. 10.) that we muſt "worſhip the Lord God, and him only we muſt ſerve." Farther, praying to the angels ſuppoſeth that they are every where preſent, or know all things; of which particulars we can never be ſufficiently aſſured to make them a ground and warrant for our prayers. What apology then can the advocates of the church of Rome make for their ſuperſtitious, their ſacrilegious practice in this particular? Will they ſay that it is agreeable to ſcripture? The apoſtle directly forbids it; (Col. II. 18.) "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary hu-"mility and worſhipping of angels." Will they allege the practice

of the primitive Chriſtians in their defenſe? It is plain from the teſtimonies of the fathers and from the ancient liturgies, that no ſuch cuſtom prevailed in the churches of God for above 300 years after Chriſt. Will they reply that they offer not to the angels the ſame worſhip which they offer to God, but only ſome lower kind of homage and adoration? When St. John offered to worſhip the angel, neither St. John nor the angel make any ſuch diſtinction; the angel doth not admit this or that kind of worſhip, but forbids all in general, and refers to God as the only object of worſhip: (See Rev. XIX. and XXII.) "See "thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-ſervant, and of thy brethren the "prophets, and of them who keep the ſayings of this book; Worſhip "God." Will they plead in their excuſe, that they are not worthy to addreſs themſelves immediately to God, and therefore entreat the angels to intercede for them? Let them conſider (1 Tim. II. 5.) that there is but "one mediator between God and men, the man Chriſt "Jeſus." Laſtly will they pretend (for they are full of their ſhifts and evaſions) that they deſire the prayers of the angels, as we deſire the prayers one of another? We deſire men indeed to pray for us, but we do not *pray* to them for that purpoſe. Beſides, there is great danger of falling into idolatry in the firſt of theſe caſes, but none at all in the laſt; and therefore this as promoting chriſtian charity is allowed in ſcripture, and that as tending to idolatry is in ſcripture expreſly condemned.

2. We may from hence be excited to praiſe and adore that power and wiſdom, which was able to make ſuch glorious beings as the angels. For if ſome have eſteemed the creatures fit to be worſhipped by us; how much more ought we to worſhip and praiſe the great Creator? if the tranſcendent excellencies of the bleſſed ſpirits dazzle and confound us; what then ſhall we think of the Father of ſpirits, the author of all theſe excellencies? "Praiſe the Lord with harp," ſays the pſalmiſt, (Pſal. XXXIII. 2, &c.) "ſing unto him a new ſong; "For by the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the "hoſt of them by the breath of his mouth." The material world declares the glory of God; but how much more glorious doth he appear

pear in the intellectual! the intellectual, which is not only his handi-work but his image, not only made by him but made like him, and capable of knowing and ſerving him to all eternity. (Rev. IV. 11.) "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power; "for thou haſt created all things, and for thy pleaſure they are, and "were created."

IV. The bleſſed angels are miniſters of providence to men, eſpecially to good men. An obvious and eaſy proof of this are the words of the apoſtle (Heb. I. 14.) "Are they not all miniſtring ſpirits ſent forth to "miniſter for them who ſhall be heirs of ſalvation?" The bleſſed angels we ſee are ſent forth to "miniſter for them, who ſhall be heirs of "ſalvation," that is for all good chriſtians and good men: And not only ſome particular ranks and orders of them are ſent forth, but *all* in general, the higheſt as well as the loweſt. "Are they not *all* mini-"ſtring ſpirits ſent forth to miniſter?" It is objected indeed to this latter aſſertion, that the ſacred writers ſpeak of ſome angels as "ſtand-"ing before God," and as "continually beholding the face of God." But theſe phraſes are ſo far from being exceptions againſt our doctrin, that they are rather arguments for it. They are metaphors borrowed from earthly things, and transferred to heavenly, and ſignify that theſe angels are, upon all occaſions, ready at hand to receive the divine commands, and to go in and out before the Almighty; as officers wait in the preſence-chambers of ſovran princes, to diſpatch their or-ders and execute their royal will. Accordingly we find in ſcripture, that the ſame angels, who are ſaid to "ſtand before God," and "con-"tinually to behold the face of God," are yet employed in embaſ-ſies and tranſactions between God and men. St. Luke in the begin-ning of his Goſpel relates how the angel Gabriel was ſent to Zacharias, that very Gabriel who is there ſaid to "ſtand in the preſence of God." (Luke I. 19.) "And the angel ſaid unto him, I am Gabriel that ſtand "in the preſence of God, and am ſent to ſpeak unto thee, and to "ſhow thee theſe glad tidings." Our bleſſed Saviour ſpeaketh of ſome angels (Matt. XVIII. 10.) as "always beholding the face of his "Father which is in heaven;" and yet from the ſame verſe we learn,

that

that thoſe very angels are the *guardians* and protectors of his *little ones.* Of Michael we read in the prophecy of Daniel (X. 13.) that he went to "fight with the prince of Perſia;" and by St. Jude (ver. 9.) we are taught that he "contended with the devil about the body of "Moſes:" and yet this ſame Michael is ſtiled (Jude 9.) an "arch-"angel," and (Dan. X. 13.) "one of the chief princes," and in the book of the Revelation (XII. 7.) is drawn as the captain and leader of the heavenly hoſt. What is meant by that contention with the devil about the body of Moſes, and upon what account it was raiſed, is not material to our preſent purpoſe to inquire: but it may moſt probably be conceived, that according to the Jewiſh tradition Michael diſputed with the devil about the body of Moſes, leſt the Jews ſhould get it into their hands, and by the devil's inſtigation ſhould preſerve it as a holy relic and worſhip it: and agreeably with this it is ſaid in Deuteronomy (XXXIV. 6.) that Moſes was buried, but "no man "knoweth of his ſepulchre unto this day." In the Targum of Jonathan upon this paſſage of Deuteronomy it is affirmed, that he was buried by Michael and Gabriel: and Philo in the concluſion of his life of Moſes ſaith, that he was buried not by men but by angels. It was a tradition among the Jews (a tradition (2) founded on ſcripture) that there were ſeven angels, who were "chief princes" and preſided as it were over the reſt; and theſe ſeven are called in ſcripture, ſometimes "the ſeven angels who ſtood before God," (Rev. VIII. 2.) ſometimes "the ſeven ſpirits of God ſent forth into all the earth," (Rev. V. 6.) and ſometimes "the ſeven eyes of the Lord which run to and fro "through the whole earth." (Zech. IV. 10.) And indeed why ſhould ſuch an employment be thought unworthy of the higheſt of angels, ſince the Son of God himſelf has condeſcended to become man, and to ſuffer for us?

Whether every man hath a guardian angel or good genius aſſigned him (as many learned men, Heathens, Jews, and Chriſtians have believed) it is not perhaps poſſible for us clearly to determin. But it appears rather probable from the word of God. The royal preacher in

(2) Of the Seven Archangels, ſee Mr. Mede's 10th Diſcourſe.

giving

giving directions about making religious vows layeth down this rule, (Eccleſ. V. 6.) " Suffer not thy mouth to cauſe thy fleſh to ſin, nei-" ther ſay thou before the angel that it was an error." Now by " the " angel" ſeveral underſtand the guardian angel, who was preſent at the making of the vow. In the XIIth chapter of the Acts of the Apoſtles we read, that when the ſaints were informed that St. Peter was releaſed from priſon, and waited at the door, they could not believe that it was he, but ſaid (ver. 15.) " It is his angel;" doubtleſs they meant his guardian angel aſſuming his ſhape and voice. This paſſage ſhoweth plainly enough what was the opinion of the Jews and firſt Chriſtians in this particular. Nay our bleſſed Lord himſelf commands us not to deſpiſe any of his little ones, and that for this reaſon becauſe *their angels* have continual acceſs to God, and will truly report their caſe, and obtain redreſs for their wrongs; (Matt. XVIII. 10.) " Take heed that ye deſpiſe not one of theſe little ones, for I " ſay unto you that in heaven *their angels* do always behold the face " of my Father which is in heaven."

Wherein the miniſterial office of the bleſſed angels with reſpect to men particularly conſiſts, we may in great meaſure collect from the books of the Old and New Teſtament. I preſume it is needleſs to obſerve, that the miniſtration of angels is not ſo frequent and viſible in the preſent as it was in former times, is not ſo conſpicuous under the Chriſtian as it was under the Jewiſh diſpenſation. Apparitions of angels as well as other miraculous powers ſeem now to be totally withdrawn, and were not at firſt continued ſo long under the goſpel as under the law. The Jews are therefore ſaid by Stephen (Acts VII. 53.) to have " received the law by the diſpoſition of angels." It is ſaid by St. Paul (Gal. III. 19.) to have been " ordained by angels in " the hand of a mediator:" and in the Epiſtle to the Hebrews (II. 2.) it is called " the word ſpoken by angels." But " unto the an-" gels," it is ſaid in the ſame Epiſtle and the ſame place (ver. 5.) " hath he not put in ſubjection the world to come whereof we ſpeak," that is the Chriſtian diſpenſation. It is under the more immediate government of the Son of God, and is conducted more according to the

the ſtated and regular courſe of providence. Miracles are now ceaſed, angels miniſter now in a leſs extraordinary and more imperceptible manner; and wherein their miniſtry principally conſiſts, we may as I ſay in great meaſure collect from ſcripture, the only certain rule and guide in matters of this nature.

From thence we learn that ſome of them preſide and watch over kingdoms and ſtates. It would eſtabliſh this point beyond all doubt or contradiction, if we were to read that paſſage in Deuteronomy (XXXII. 8.) according to the tranſlation of the Seventy; "When the "moſt High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he ſepa- "rated the ſons of Adam, he appointed the bounds of the nations "according to the number of the angels;" in which ſenſe the ſon of Sirach appears to have underſtood it, when he ſaid (Ecclus XVII. 17.) that "in the diviſion of the nations of the whole earth, he ſet "a ruler over every people, but Iſrael is the Lord's portion." But there are more indubitable teſtimonies; for we read in Daniel (X. 20.) of "angels fighting with the prince of Perſia," and the defeat of numerous armies is ſometimes aſcribed to their unſeen aſſiſtance. By "the prince of Perſia" and "the prince of Grecia" in the ſame prophecy may moſt probably be underſtood the tutelary angels of thoſe countries. "Now," ſays the angel, "will I return to fight with the "prince of Perſia, and when I am gone forth, the prince of Grecia "ſhall come:" Which Mr. Lowth thus paraphraſeth: "When I "am gone forth from the divine preſence, the tutelar angel of the "Grecian empire will appear in the court of heaven, and offer his "reaſons for tranſlating the empire from the Perſians to the Grecians, "that the Jews may enjoy the benefit of their dominion, as a govern- "ment that will be more favorable to them than the Perſian emperors "were." The Jews have all along been of opinion, that Michael the archangel was the patron and protector of their nation, and in the ſcripture we find an angel ſpeaking to a Jew calleth Michael "their "prince;" (Dan. X. 21.) "There is none that holdeth with me in "theſe things but Michael your prince:" and a little afterwards he is called "the great prince which ſtandeth for the children of Iſrael;"

(XII.

(XII. 1.) " And at that time ſhall Michael ſtand up, the great prince " which ſtandeth for the children of thy people." As Michael was the guardian angel of the Jewiſh church, ſo the angel Gabriel appears to have been employed with relation to the Chriſtian church. He was ſent (Dan. IX. Luke I.) to inform Daniel of the time of the coming of the Meſſiah, to inform Zacharias of the conception of John the Baptiſt, and the Virgin Mary of the conception of Chriſt.

They preſerve men from temporal evils and calamities: for " the " angel of the Lord," ſays the pſalmiſt, (Pſal. XXXIV. 7.) " in- " campeth round about them that fear him, and he delivereth them:" and again (Pſal. XCI. 11, 12.) " He ſhall give his angels charge over " thee, to keep thee in all thy ways; They ſhall bear thee up in their " hands, leſt thou daſh thy foot againſt a ſtone." And in fact we find Lot (Gen. XIX.) reſcued from the burning of Sodom, the three young men (Dan. III.) delivered out of the fiery furnace, the child Jeſus (Matt. II.) preſerved from the rage of Herod, St. Peter (Acts XII.) releaſed from priſon, and all by the direction and aſſiſtance of the holy angels.

Sometimes they prevent the ſins and miſcarriages of men: for thus an angel of the Lord (Numb. XXII. 32.) " withſtood Balaam, becauſe " his way was perverſe before the Lord:" thus when Hagar fled from the face of her miſtreſs, (Gen. XVI. 9) an angel of the Lord perſuaded her " to return to her miſtreſs, and to ſubmit herſelf under " her hands."

Sometimes they give notice of great bleſſings and unexpected deliverances, as we read (Judg. VI. and XIII.) in the ſtories of Gideon and Samſon, and (Acts XXVII.) of St. Paul in his ſhipwrack, and more particularly on occaſion of the greateſt and moſt ſignal of all bleſſings and deliverances, the conception and birth of our bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer.

Sometimes they execute the divine vengeance upon wicked men. Thus the angels were inſtrumental (Gen. XIX.) in the deſtruction of Sodom and Gomorrah: thus an angel of the Lord (1 Chron.

XXI.) puniſhed the pride of David in numbring his people with a peſtilence: thus (2 Kings XIX. 35.) "an angel of the Lord deſtroyed "an hundred fourſcore and five thouſand men in the camp of Sen-"nacherib king of Aſſyria:" thus (Acts XII. 23.) "an angel of the "Lord ſmote Herod" for receiving the blaſphemous acclamations of his ſubjects, "and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghoſt."

They ſuggeſt good thoughts to men; for the power of infuſing wicked thoughts is in ſcripture (1 Chron. XXI. 1. Acts V. 3.) expreſly attributed to Satan, and can we think or believe that the evil angels have greater power or greater inclination to do hurt than the bleſſed angels have to do good?

They aid and ſupport men in their trials and temptations; as when our Saviour "was in the wilderneſs forty days tempted of Satan" (Mark I. 13.) "the angels miniſtred unto him;" and when he was in his agony in the garden, (Luke XXII. 43.) "there appeared an "angel unto him from heaven, ſtrengthening him." What was done to him viſibly and in an extraordinary manner, will be done to others inviſibly and according to the more uſual methods of providence.

They are ſuppoſed to be preſent at the public worſhip of God: for St. Paul recommends to the Corinthian women a decent habit and behaviour in the public aſſemblies (1 Cor. XI. 10.) "becauſe of the an-"gels:" and David declares that "before the Gods," that is before the angels, ενώπιον αγγελων as the Seventy tranſlate it, "he will ſing "praiſe unto the Lord;" (Pſal. CXXXVIII. 1.) "I will praiſe thee "with my whole heart, before the Gods will I ſing praiſe unto thee:" and perhaps that direction of Solomon touching religious vows, (Eccleſ. V. 6.) "Suffer not thy mouth to cauſe thy fleſh to ſin, neither ſay "thou before the angel that it was an error," relates particularly to thoſe vows which we make in the houſe of God; for concerning our behaviour in the houſe of God he has been diſcourſing in the preceding verſes of the chapter, "Keep thy foot when thou goeſt to the "houſe of God," &c. When Jacob was going to Padan-aram, (Gen. XXVIII. 12, &c.) "he dreamed, and behold, a ladder ſet "upon the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold

"the

" the angels of God aſcending and deſcending on it. And behold, " the Lord ſtood above it." From this appearance of angels Jacob concludes this place to be God's houſe: and we may likewiſe infer God's houſe the place of his worſhip to be attended by angels. " This " is none other but the houſe of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

They are pleaſed with our good works; for our Saviour aſſures us (Luke XV. 10.) " there is joy in the preſence of the angels of God " over one ſinner that repenteth."

They attend good men at the hour of death, and convey their ſouls to the manſions of bliſs. For the Chaldee paraphraſt on the Song of Solomon Chap. IV. Ver. 12. ſpeaking of Paradiſe obſerves, that no man has power of entring into it but the juſt, whoſe ſouls are carried thither by the hands of the angels: And this opinion of the Jews is confirmed by no leſs an authority than that of our bleſſed Lord himſelf in one of his parables, the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus: (Luke XVI. 22.) " And it came to paſs that the beggar died, " and was carried by the angels into Abraham's boſom;" Abraham's boſom and paradiſe ſignifying both one and the ſame place, the place appointed for righteous ſouls between their death and their reſurrection.

At the laſt great day they ſhall " gather together the elect with a " great ſound of a trumpet, and ſhall attend the Son of man coming " in his glory, and ſhall ſever the wicked from among the juſt, and " caſt them into the furnace of fire." This is the language of ſcripture, and ſo needeth not any farther proof. Other inſtances beſides theſe may be collected, but theſe are the principal, and theſe are ſufficient to ſhow how wonderfully God employs the ſervices of angels with regard to men.

Many are the practical uſes, which may be made of this propoſition thus largely explained. Let us ſpecify ſome of them.

From hence we may in the firſt place learn to be very careful of our behaviour, conſidering that we are always in the preſence, and act under the eye of ſome of the bleſſed angels. They are witneſſes of our actions, and will behold our trial at the laſt great day: and therefore the apoſtle charges his ſon Timothy to do his duty not only before

God and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but alſo before " the elect angels;" (1 Tim. V. 21.) " I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jeſus " Chriſt, and the elect angels, that thou obſerve theſe things." We take care to behave ourſelves well, when we are in company with our ſuperiors; and ought not we to pay more deference to theſe bleſſed ſpirits, than to the wiſeſt and greateſt of the ſons of men? The thoughts of their continual care of us and inſpection over us ſhould awe us even in our moſt private retirements. In our bed and in our chamber we ſhould be as cautious and as much upon our guard, as if we were in a theatre or before an auguſt aſſembly, where many have their eyes upon us. If a man has no reſpect to himſelf, to his human nature, when alone; yet methinks he ſhould have to the angels: For if he continues to provoke them by his follies and immoralities, they will quit their poſt, and leave him naked and defenſeleſs to " his adverſary " the devil (1 Pet. V. 8.) who goeth about ſeeking whom he may " devour."

From hence we may in the ſecond place learn that noble leſſon of good-nature, to condeſcend to the loweſt offices for the ſervice of our brethren. For we ſee the higheſt angels refuſe not to miniſter to one of the leaſt of Chriſt's little ones: and ſhall we think ſuch an employment below us, we who are liable to the like paſſions, we who are ſubject to the like infirmities? They leave their heaven to relieve and aſſiſt mankind: and ſhall we, ſeeing our brother in miſery, ſit ſtill, or paſs by coolly on the other ſide? Shall we not rather eſteem it our greateſt pleaſure, our higheſt honor, to be joined with angels and archangels in the ſame glorious deſign of doing good to the ſouls and bodies of men? Certainly good-nature is ſo far from being a fault or weakneſs in any man, that it is a virtue of the moſt exalted ſpirits; is not only the moſt humane, but the moſt divine temper of mind, and maketh men angels as it were one to another, and earth the very image of heaven!

Theſe conſiderations may farther inſtruct us to ſtand all trials, to bear all afflictions, not only with patience but with courage. For our poverty is made rich, our weakneſs is made ſtrength by the help and aſſiſtance

aſſiſtance of the holy angels. In our greateſt dangers let us never deſpond; for could we like the prophet Eliſha's ſervant but "open "our eyes," (2 Kings VI. 17.) we ſhould behold "horſes and cha- "riots of fire," the armies of the living God, incamped around us. "Yea (Pſal. XXIII. 4.) though we walk through the valley of the "ſhadow of death, we need fear no evil; for thou, O Lord, art with "us, thy rod and thy ſtaff," thy bleſſed angels, "comfort us."

Once more. Who can contemplate the love of God in thus ſending forth his holy angels to miniſter unto us, and not break out into the moſt fervent raptures of praiſe and thankſgiving? What are we that ſuch exalted beings ſhould take us into their patronage and protection? that they ſhould intereſt themſelves in our affairs, and make our welfare a part of their own? Bleſſed God! how haſt thou poured out the riches of thy mercy upon man! how haſt thou crowned him with favor and loving kindneſs on every ſide! All nature contributes one way or other to his eaſe and his happineſs. He is made the lord of earth, and heir of heaven: he hath the creatures to ſerve him, the angels to guard him, the Son of God to die for him and bring him to glory! (Eph. III. 18, 19.) "O the breadth, and length, and depth, and "highth, of the love of God which paſſeth knowlege!"

V. The chief and principal employment of the bleſſed angels is to miniſter unto God, and to ſing praiſes unto him. "Are they not all "miniſtring ſpirits," ſaith the apoſtle, (Heb. I. 14) miniſtring to their and our great Lord and Maſter? Whereſoever God manifeſts himſelf, the angels are of his train and attendence, as when he appeared to Jacob going to Padan-aram. (Gen. XXVIII. 12.) When Daniel ſaw him in viſion, (VII. 10.) "thouſand thouſands miniſtered unto him, "and ten thouſand times ten thouſand ſtood before him." He appeared in like manner to St. John, (Rev. V. 11.) "And I beheld, and "I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the "number of them was ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thou- "ſands of thouſands." Wherever the ſcripture ſpeaketh of them, it ſtileth them "God's hoſt," (Gen. XXXII. 2.) "elect angels," (1 Tim. V. 21.) "the angels of the Lord," (Pſal. XXXIV. and XCI.) "the

"miniſters

" miniſters of his that do his pleaſure;" (Pſal. CIII. 21.) and repreſenteth them as " praiſing God," (Luke II. 13.) as " ſtanding by him on " his right hand and on his left," (1 Kings XXII. 19.) " as falling " down on their faces before him, and worſhipping him that liveth for " ever and ever." (Rev. V. 14. VII. 12.) As far as we can collect from ſcripture, the angels principally delight in the contemplation and celebration of the great works of creation, redemption, and judgment. They were ſpectators and admirers of the wonderful works of creation, according to what we read in the book of Job, (XXXVIII. 4, 7.) that " when the foundations of the earth were laid, the morning ſtars " ſang together, and the ſons of God ſhouted for joy." An angel proclaimed the nativity of our bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer: (Luke II. 9—14.) " and ſuddenly there was with the angel a multitude of " the heavenly hoſt, praiſing God, and ſaying, Glory to God in the " higheſt, and on earth peace, good will towards men." The myſteries of the goſpel are things, which it is expreſly aſſerted (1 Pet. I. 12.) " the angels deſire to look into." It is again and again repeated, that they will attend the Son of God coming in the glory of his Father to judge the world: and in ſome texts, as (1 Tim. V. 21.) " I charge " thee before God, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the elect angels;" and (Rev. III. 5.) " I will confeſs his name before my Father, and " before his angels;" they are conſidered not only as attendents to make up the pomp and ceremony of judicature, but as witneſſes to the juſtice of the judgment. Thus much may ſuffice to confirm this propoſition. There is the leſs need to be copious in the proof of it; becauſe it is the voice of nature, that God created all things for his honor and glory; and the greater excellencies any beings enjoy under him, the more capable they are of ſerving him, and the greater obligations they lie under to bleſs and adore him.

I dare not venture to wade any farther in theſe inquiries. Here the ſcripture ſtoppeth, and here too muſt ſtop our diſcourſe. If any man ſuppoſeth, that he can advance any thing upon reaſonable grounds beyond what is expreſſed or what is implied in ſcripture; let him inform us, how ſpirits miniſter to ſpirit, how the bleſſed angels enjoy the

the beatific viſion, how God communicates himſelf unto them, what are their numbers, and what are their names, for the names of only two of them, Michael and Gabriel, are mentioned in the canonical ſcripture, what degrees of glory they poſſeſſed before, what they poſſeſs after the fall of their fellow-angels, and what they will poſſeſs for ever and ever. Theſe are things plainly out of our depth; and what God hath concealed, let not man pretend to diſcover. One thing we may properly enough obſerve, that the holy penmen are pretty large and circumſtantial in deſcribing the miniſtry of angels with regard to men, as being of the greateſt uſe and importance to us; not ſo, in treating of the miniſtry of angels with reference to God; they ſpeak only in the general, and enter not into the particulars, as no ways concerning us and perhaps lying altogether above our poor apprehenſion: they make uſe of metaphorical terms, and moſt of their metaphors they derive from princes and courts, thus applying the higheſt of earthly things to give us ſome faint idea of things celeſtial. And indeed this conduct is perfectly agreeable to the deſign and intent of holy ſcripture; which was written not to make us wiſer philoſophers, but to make us better men, not to gratify our curioſity and indulge idle and vain ſpeculations, but to regulate our practice and ſpiritualize our behaviour. Now the practical inferences naturally flowing from this head are ſuch as follow.

1. This may be a caution to us to think meanly of our ſervices to God, and never to arrogate any merit to ourſelves, never to pretend to any works of ſupererogation. "When we have done all thoſe things "which are commanded us, we are unprofitable ſervants," (Luke XVII. 10.) unprofitable in ourſelves, much more unprofitable if compared with the holy angels. God wanteth not the ſervices of any of his creatures; but if he wanted them, he hath more noble beings to ſerve him than the children of men. "Behold he putteth no truſt in "his ſervants, and his angels he chargeth with folly," (Job IV. 18, 19.) or (as the words are rendered in the margin of our bibles) Behold he putteth no truſt in his ſervants, nor in his angels in whom he put light; "How much leſs in them that dwell in houſes of clay, whoſe "foundation is in the duſt, which are cruſhed before the moth?"

2. This

2. This may imprint a reverential awe of the majeſty of God upon our hearts, and teach us to be truly humble and devout, when we make our addreſſes to him. Whenever we fall upon our knees, let us paint him to our imagination, as the prophet Daniel deſcribes him, (VII. 10.) "with thouſand thouſands miniſtring unto him, and ten "thouſand times ten thouſand ſtanding before him." How would this fix and compoſe our wandring thoughts, inſpirit our flat and cold deſires, and engage at once all the powers and faculties of our ſouls!

3. Laſtly, this may kindle within us a holy ambition of imitating theſe bleſſed ſpirits. For who can hear of their unwearied diligence in the ſervice of God, and not aſpire to reſemble it? Our bleſſed Saviour hath taught us to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in "heaven:" and how can the will of God be done on earth as it is in heaven, unleſs we endevor to think and act (as far as human frailty admits) like the angels of heaven? Their great work is praiſe and thankſgiving, and praiſe and thankſgiving muſt therefore be our great work alſo. We muſt accuſtom ourſelves to the ſame exerciſes in this world, if ever we hope to join with them in the world to come. Therefore with angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praiſing thee and ſaying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hoſts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord moſt High. Amen.

VI. Beſides theſe good angels there are likewiſe evil angels or ſpirits. The Heathens themſelves believed that there were ſuch beings; and into this belief they were led, I ſuppoſe, partly by the reaſon of the thing, and partly by tradition. And in truth whoever taketh a view of the world or looketh into the hiſtory of former ages, will diſcover numberleſs effects, which evidently point to ſuch beings as their cauſe. It ſeemeth extremely difficult, if not altogether impoſſible, to account for the origin of evil in the world without the ſuppoſition of evil ſpirits: And he who can run counter to the reaſon and experience of all ages and nations in this particular, muſt himſelf be poſſeſſed, muſt labor under a ſtrange infatuation of mind, and in ſome meaſure eſtabliſh the very thing which he endevors to overthrow. But ſetting human reaſon,

ſon, ſetting human authorities aſide, the oracles of God put the matter beyond all doubt, all contradiction. From thence we learn, that there are "evil ſpirits" as well as "good ſpirits;" (1 Sam. XVI. 14.) that there are "angels of the devil" as well as "angels of the "Lord;" (Matt. XXV. 41.) that there are "angels of darkneſs" as well as "angels of light;" (2 Cor. XI. 14.) that there are "the dra-"gon and his angels" as well as "Michael and his angels;" (Rev. XII. 7.) and our religion itſelf is founded on the ſuppoſition of the exiſtence of ſuch beings, for we know (1 John III. 8.) that "for this "purpoſe the Son of God was manifeſted that he might deſtroy the "works of the devil."

Theſe evil angels were created by God. It was the opinion of ſome ancient heathen philoſophers, that there were two independent principles, one the author of all good and the other the author of all evil; and this opinion was afterwards adopted by Manes, and made a hereſy in the chriſtian church. But that there is only one independent and ſelf-exiſtent being is capable of the moſt ſtrict demonſtration; and if we could ſuppoſe two independent principles, this infinitely good and that infinitely bad, yet they would be the negation the one of the other, and ſo would be ſame in effect as no principle at all. And what reaſon declares in the caſe, revelation alſo confirms. "I am the Lord," ſays God ſpeaking in the prophet Iſaiah, (XLV. 5, 7.) "and there is "none elſe, there is no God beſides me: I form the light, and create "darkneſs; I make peace, and create evil; I the Lord do all theſe "things." Job more particularly informs us, (XXVI. 13.) that "the "hand of the Lord hath formed the crooked ſerpent," where by "the crooked ſerpent" the ſeventy and others underſtand that old ſerpent called the Devil and Satan. Biſhop Sherlock in his Diſſertation on the Senſe of the ancients before Chriſt upon the circumſtances and conſequences of the fall, hath cited this paſſage to the ſame purpoſe; but I muſt own, I rather underſtand it of the conſtellation ſo called,

Maximus hic flexu ſinuoſo elabitur anguis, &c.
Virg. Geor. I. 244, &c.

The heavens are firſt mentioned in general, and then that particular conſtellation. " By his ſpirit he hath garniſhed the heavens; his " hand hath formed the crooked ſerpent." St. Paul inſtructs us more certainly, (Col. I. 16, 17.) that " all things were created by him, " whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers," that is all the different ranks and degrees of angels, bad as well as good, (ſee Eph. VI. 12.) " were created by him, and he is before " all things, and by him all things conſiſt."

They were created good, but fell from their firſt eſtate. It is evident to common ſenſe, that every effect of an infinitely wiſe and powerful and good being muſt be good and perfect in its kind; and all its evil (its moral evil) muſt be wholly owing to the defection of the creature, and not to the fault or folly of the creator. " God ſaw every " thing that he had made, (Gen. I. 31.) and behold it was very " good :" but " the devil abode not in the truth," ſaith St. John; (John VIII. 44.) ſome of the angels " ſinned," ſaith St. Peter; (2 Pet. II. 4.) or as St. Jude expreſſeth it (ver. 6.) " kept not their firſt eſtate " but left their own habitation." And indeed this was very poſſible, for probably angels as well as men are in a ſtate of probation, and were indued (as fitting it was that they ſhould be indued) with liberty and choice, and ſo might act or not act according to the law of their nature. We read in the Revelation (XII. 7, 8.) that " there was war " in heaven;' Michael and his angels fought againſt the dragon, and " the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was " their place found any more in heaven." By this war in heaven the apoſtle moſt probably meant to typify the long oppoſition between the Heathen and the Chriſtian religions, the downfall of the former and the triumph of the latter in the reign of Conſtantine. But whatever is the ſecret and allegorical meaning of this paſſage, there muſt neceſſarily be preſuppoſed ſome litteral and hiſtorical truth to give birth to this deſcription, ſome previous tranſaction, from whence theſe images are derived, theſe metaphors are borrowed, and applied to this or that particular: and it may eaſily be conceived, that as God made uſe of the miniſtry of the holy angels to expel man from paradiſe; ſo he employed

employed them in like manner to caſt the devil and his aſſociates down from heaven.

It appears probable that the occaſion of their fall was pride. This is not expreſly aſſerted, but I think it is pretty plainly intimated in ſcripture. The prophet Iſaiah denounceth the judgments of God againſt the king of Babylon; and the prophet Ezekiel, againſt the prince of Tyre: but both the one and the other do it in ſuch a manner, as evidently ſhoweth that they had ſomething greater and higher in their view. Hear the words of Iſaiah; (XIV. 12, &c.) "How art "thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, ſon of the morning!—For "thou haſt ſaid in thine heart, I will aſcend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the ſtars of God;—I will aſcend above the "highths of the clouds, I will be like the moſt High; Yet thou ſhalt "be brought down to hell, to the ſides of the pit." Hear again how Ezekiel delivers himſelf; (XXVIII. 2, &c.) "Becauſe thine heart is "lifted up, and thou haſt ſaid I am a God, I ſit in the ſeat of God; "Becauſe thou haſt ſet thine heart as the heart of God; Behold therefore—they ſhall bring thee down to the pit.—Thou waſt perfect in "thy ways from the day that thou waſt created, till iniquity was "found in thee. Thou haſt ſinned, therefore will I caſt thee as profane out of the mountain of God, and I will deſtroy thee, O covering Cherub, from the midſt of the ſtones of fire; Thy heart "was lifted up becauſe of thy beauty, thou haſt corrupted thy wiſdom by reaſon of thy brightneſs." Certainly it was the pride and the fall of angels, that enriched the prophets with all theſe tropes and figures, and raiſed their thoughts, and ſwelled their imaginations. Very applicable to this purpoſe likewiſe is that paſſage in Eccleſiaſticus, (X. 12, 13.) "The beginning of pride is, when one departeth "from God, and his heart is turned away from his maker; For pride "is the beginning of ſin," or as the words may be rendered, pride *was* the beginning of ſin. In this ſenſe ſome underſtand that direction of St. Paul, (1 Tim. III. 6.) "A biſhop muſt be not a novice, leſt "being lifted up with pride, he fall into the condemnation of the "devil;" leſt his high ſtation ſhould betray him into the devil's crime,

and ſo make him liable to the devil's puniſhment. And indeed this is the moſt natural account, that reaſon can frame to itſelf of the fall of angels. They could have no temptations, no ſollicitations from without; all the ſprings, all the motives to vice muſt ariſe from within, from reflecting on their own excellencies without regarding the great author and beſtower of them, from admiring the gift without being ſufficiently thankful to the giver. And ever ſince their fall we may obſerve, that they have aſpired to a ſort of equality with God, and their language to the children of the world hath been the ſame as it was to the Saviour of the world, (Matt. IV. 9.) "All theſe things will I give "thee, if thou wilt fall down and worſhip me:" and ſo great hath been their ſucceſs in this particular, that in ſeveral barbarous nations the devil hath been worſhipped and ſerved inſtead of God bleſſed for ever.

It appears too that they are ſo fallen that they will be finally adjudged to a ſtate of everlaſting miſery. At leaſt as far as we can apprehend or diſcern, the redeemer of fallen man hath not redeemed the fallen angels. (Heb. II. 16.) "He took not on him the nature "of angels, but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham;" or, as ſome critics expound the words, and as they are tranſlated in the margin of our bibles, "he taketh not hold of angels, but of the ſeed of Abra-"ham he taketh hold;" thoſe he ſuffereth to lapſe into the depths of miſery, but of theſe he taketh hold, preventeth their ruin, and ſtoppeth their fall. They will be judged; as we are taught by (3) St. Peter, (2 Pet. II. 4.) "the angels that ſinned God hath caſt down to "hell, to be reſerved unto judgment:" and in the words of St. Jude (ver. 6.) "the angels which kept not their firſt eſtate, but left their "own habitation, he hath reſerved unto the judgment of the great "day." And they will then be adjudged to a ſtate of everlaſting miſery; for "everlaſting fire," we know, (Matt. XXV. 41.) "is "prepared for the devil and his angels." They are "reſerved for "everlaſting chains under darkneſs," as St. Jude expreſſeth it; "for "chains of darkneſs," according to St. Peter: and at the end of the

(3) Of evil Angels and their place, ſee Mede's fourth Diſcourſe.

millennium

millennium (Rev. XX. 10.) "the devil is caſt into the lake of fire and "brimſtone, and ſhall be tormented day and night, for ever and "ever;" the ſame kind of puniſhment, and of the ſame duration, being denounced againſt evil angels as againſt evil men.

In the mean time they are permitted to range about the earth and the air; and the devil is therefore called by St. Paul (Eph. II. 2.) "the prince of the power of the air;" and evil ſpirits are called by the ſame apoſtle (Eph. VI. 12.) "ſpiritual wickedneſs in high" or "heavenly places:" and when our Saviour was for caſting the devils out of the man poſſeſſed by the legion, they beſought him (Luke VIII. 31. Matt. VIII. 29.) that "he would not command them to go out "into the deep," and "torment them before the time." Being rejected of God themſelves, they endevor to draw and intice others from their duty and allegiance to him: knowing their own mifery, they are willing to have ſome companions to ſhare with them in it. In the beginning they deceived our firſt parents, and ſtill deceive their miſerable children; and from firſt to laſt have been retainers to vice, and ſollicitors and procurers of evil. More particularly. They ſuggeſt evil thoughts to men; for thus (1 Chron. XXI. 1.) "Satan provoked "David to number Iſrael;" thus (Luke XXII. 3.) "Satan entered "into Judas;" and (Acts V. 3.) "filled the hearts of Ananias and "Sapphira to lie to the Holy Ghoſt;" and St. Paul calleth him (Eph. II. 2.) "the ſpirit that now worketh in the children of diſobedience." They inflict temporal evils on men; for thus Satan was the great inſtrument of Job's afflictions; and the crooked woman in the goſpel is ſaid (Luke XIII. 16.) to "be bound" in this manner "by Satan;" and St. Paul's thorn in the fleſh (the bodily infirmity wherewith he labored) was (2 Cor. XII. 7.) "the meſſenger of Satan to buffet him:" And I believe moſt of the evils in the world ſpring from this ſource; they are permitted indeed by God, but effected immediately by evil ſpirits. They accuſe men before God; as Satan traduced and calumniated holy Job; and in his very name (διαβολος) is ſufficiently implied this part of his character, (Rev. XII. 10.) "the accuſer of "our brethren, which accuſeth them before our God day and "night."

" night." They are maſters of all the cunning and policy in the world; ſometimes they terrify us (1 Pet. V. 8.) like " roaring lions," ſometimes they allure us (2 Cor. XI. 14.) like " angels of light." Theſe are ſome few ſketches of their qualifications left us in holy writ. It is not poſſible for us to enumerate them all. Their ways and manner of acting muſt lie altogether above our capacities. They are angels, and have all the natural gifts and indowments of angels; only they pervert to evil purpoſes what was originally deſigned for good.

From this ſpeculative part of the diſcourſe we may now draw ſome practical concluſions.

1. As it is certain, if revelation is certain, that there are evil angels or ſpirits, let us not indulge the ſceptical humor of the age to doubt of the reality, and much leſs to deride the notion of the exiſtence of ſuch beings. It may be ridiculous to believe too much of evil ſpirits, but it is equally abſurd to believe too little. It is not reaſon, it is not philoſophy, that maketh men doubt or diſbelieve, but the vain affectation of appearing ſingular. Reaſon and revelation, philoſophy and ſcripture, will in the end be found to agree together. And he who can doubt of the exiſtence of ſuch beings, if there are ſuch beings, giveth them thereby a manifeſt advantage over him. He can have no better reaſon for doubting of their exiſtence, than becauſe he doth not ſee them; and upon the ſame principle he might as well deny that there is a God, as that there is a devil.

2. As theſe angels are the creatures of God, they derive all their powers and faculties from him; and can do nothing, can deſign nothing without his permiſſion: and therefore we may comfort ourſelves againſt the fears and apprehenſions of evil ſpirits. God will not ſuffer one part of the creation to break looſe upon another; and theſe conquerors of the world can never totally conquer us, unleſs we furniſh them with weapons againſt ourſelves. Let us engage God on our ſide, and we may withſtand and baffle all their aſſaults; for greater is the creator than the creature, (1 John IV. 4.) " greater is he that is in " us than he that is in the world."

3. He

3. He that thinketh he ſtandeth, let him take heed leſt he fall. The perfections of angels could not ſecure them from falling; and how then ſhall we keep our ground, who are incompaſſed with ſo many infirmities and defects? We had need to exert our greateſt care, and even our greateſt care will ſometimes prove too little.

4. We may from hence learn to ſtifle and ſuppreſs the ſeeds of pride and vain glory. Pride is a fault, to which the greateſt minds, the moſt exalted ſpirits lie open and expoſed. They, who ſeem to be raiſed above other failings, are yet eaſily attacked on the ſide of vanity. It was the ſin of angels; and what was a ſin in them, can never have any grace and comelineſs in us. "Why is earth and aſhes proud?" ſays the ſon of Sirach, (Ecclus X. 9.) What have we? what are we, that we can take delight and complacence in ourſelves? The angels forfeited all their happineſs by pride; and if we partake in their crime, we ſhall alſo partake in their condemnation.

5. We ſee what great reaſon we have to praiſe almighty God, that while the fallen angels are left deſolate, we are redeemed; that while they are conſigned to a ſtate of everlaſting miſery, we are again made capable of everlaſting happineſs. Indeed their crime was of a blacker dye than ours; their perverſeneſs was greater, greater was their ingratitude; they were in poſſeſſion of greater happineſs, they ſinned againſt greater light; they had no ſuperior beings to tempt them, but were themſelves tempters to themſelves. But ſtill our caſe was very bad, though theirs was much worſe; we had nothing to plead in arreſt of judgment, no merit to recommend ourſelves, no poſſible means of making any compenſation for our fault; and it is wholly owing to the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, that this wide difference is made between their caſe and ours, that while they continue monuments of juſtice, we are choſen veſſels of mercy. What thanks can we pay unto the Lord for his loving kindneſs? (1 Cor. VI. 20.) "We are bought with "a price; let us therefore glorify God in our bodies and in our ſpi- "rits, which are God's."

6. Our ſixth and laſt inference cannot be better expreſſed than in the language of St. Paul (Eph. VI. 10, &c.) "Finally, my brethren, "be

" be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might: Put on the " whole armour of God, that ye may be able to ſtand againſt the wiles " of the devil: For we wreſtle not againſt fleſh and blood, but againſt " principalities, againſt powers, againſt the rulers of the darkneſs of " this world, againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places: Wherefore " take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to " withſtand in the evil day, and having done all, to ſtand: Stand " therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on " the breaſt-plate of righteouſneſs; And your feet ſhod with the pre- " paration of the goſpel of peace; Above all taking the ſhield of " faith, wherewith ye ſhall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the " wicked: And take the helmet of ſalvation, and the ſword of the " Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer " and ſupplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all per- " ſeverance, and ſupplication for all ſaints." O everlaſting God, who haſt ordained and conſtituted the ſervices of angels and men in a wonderful order; mercifully grant, that as thy holy angels alway do thee ſervice in heaven; ſo by thy appointment they may ſuccur and defend us on earth, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. Amen.

DISSERTATION LI.

On the Infidelity of the preſent Age.

IT is uſual for writers and orators to declaim againſt the wickedneſs and degeneracy of the age wherein they live. O tempora, O mores, O the times, O the manners! was a (1) pathetical complaint

(1) Cicero Orat. 1. in Catilinam.
Dixerat ô mores, ô tempora Tullius olim,
Infandum ſtrueret cum Catalina neſas.
Martial.

made

made before our Saviour was born; and the ſame hath been repeated in almoſt every age ſince, men generally concluding their own times to be the worſt, as evils preſent and ſenſible certainly ſtrike and affect us more than what is only remembered or related. The *infidelity of the preſent age* is at this time a ſubject of general complaint. You hear of it from moſt pulpits; you read of it in moſt authors: and indeed it is to be feared that this is ſomewhat more than a popular cry without occaſion; the diſcourſe and actions of too many among us confirm our apprehenſions, for inſtead of being aſhamed of their infidelity they profeſs it and even glory in it. But however the complaints of ſome mens unbelief are an argument of the belief of others; and it is to be hoped even in theſe degenerate days, that many there are who have not bowed the knee to Baal, that many there are who both believe and live as becometh Chriſtians, endevoring " to adorn the doctrin of " God our Saviour in all things." Such perſons perhaps cannot better employ a little time and reflection than in inquiring into the cauſes of modern infidelity, whence it cometh to paſs that it abounds ſo much more now than formerly, and is grown in a manner the principle of the age to deride and deny all principles. Such an inquiry may not only tend to our ſatisfaction in a point of this importance, but may poſſibly prove the beſt means of preſerving ourſelves from the general taint and infection. Seeing the rocks, upon which others have made ſhipwrack of faith and a good conſcience, we may the more cautiouſly avoid them, and thereby be the better enabled to fulfil the precept of the apoſtle, (Heb. III. 12.) " Take heed brethren leſt there " be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the " living God." " An evil heart of unbelief," ſaith the apoſtle, intimating that want of faith and want of virtue are nearly allied together; and experience may convince us, that infidelity both proceedeth from immorality, and tendeth to immorality, as the rivers which riſe from the ſea run into the ſea again. But we ſhall not inſiſt upon ſuch cauſes of infidelity, as are equally common to this and all other times; we ſhall ſpecify thoſe only which are the more peculiar and diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics of the preſent age.

No part of knowlege indeed is more uſeful, more neceſſary than a right obſervation and diſcernment of the characteriſtics of men, manners, opinions and times, thoſe times eſpecially wherein we live. All perſons indeed have not a capacity for this kind of knowlege; and of thoſe who have a capacity ſome are ſo abſtracted, ſo wrapt up in theory and ſpeculation, that they attend little to practice and experience; and others are better verſed in the hiſtory and antiquities of former times, than in the knowlege of men and manners as they are at preſent. The want of this knowlege our Saviour objected to the Phariſees of old; (Matt. XVI. 3.) " O ye hypocrits ye can diſcern " the face of the ſky, but can ye not diſcern the ſigns of the times?" All times have their peculiar ſigns whereby they may be characterized and diſtinguiſhed, if we will but diligently obſerve them; and as this knowlege is uſeful to every perſon, ſo more particularly to thoſe who are teachers and inſtructors of others, and are therefore to adapt their diſcourſes to times and occaſions, and as ſpiritual phyſicians are to guard principally againſt epidemical diſtempers.

For this reaſon we would take into conſideration the complaint that is often made both in public diſcourſes and in private converſation of the infidelity of the preſent age; and inquire what can be the cauſes of the growth and increaſe of infidelity at this time more than at any other. And we would make this inquiry not merely to ſatisfy our curioſity, but for another end and with another deſign. For knowing the cauſe of a diſtemper is a great ſtep towards working a cure, at leaſt preventing the cauſes we ſhall infallibly prevent the effects. The ſubject is extenſive, but for ſome landmarks as it were to our thoughts in ſo large and ſpacious a field of matter, we ſhall treat of the particular cauſes under the following general heads, the preſent methods of education, the learning of the age, the manners of the age, and the neglects and omiſſions, not to ſay the faults of ſuperior perſons and thoſe who ſhould ſet a better example.

I. One great cauſe of the infidelity of the preſent age we conceive to be the *uſual methods of education*. He muſt have made little obſervation of men and manners, who is not ſenſible how much our religious

gious and moral character depends upon our education. Here are laid the foundations of all our future happineſs or miſery; and generally ſuch as we are when boys, ſuch we ſhall be when men, only of larger growth and proportions. A good education is without doubt the greateſt benefaction that parents can beſtow upon their children; and their memory will be bleſſed for nothing more, or with greater reaſon curſed for the contrary. It is infinitely preferable to all other acquiſitions, for all other acquiſitions without it are contemptible. A man without an eſtate is always more valuable than an eſtate without a man. A good education is a bleſſing in all ſituations and conditions of life. To a man without an eſtate it is the beſt way to get one; to a man with an eſtate it is the beſt way to enjoy one. He who leaveth an eſtate maketh proviſion for the body, but he who giveth a good education provideth for the ſoul, for a man's eternal welfare and happineſs as well as for his temporal.

Yet how often is a good eſtate a privilege for a bad education? Will the town furniſh us with no inſtances of the ſons of great families brought up in all the faſhions and extravagances and vices of the place, with ſycophants and paraſites about them inſtead of tutors and governors. They have no preceptor whom they regard but their own will. Inſtead of being properly inſtructed to become uſeful magiſtrates and able lawgivers, they are initiated early in all the arts and myſteries of gaming. Even children have their little routs and parties at play. They are indulged in improper liberties and expenſes at home, and conſequently can ill ſubmit to the diſciplin of ſchools and univerſities, and make the leſs improvement there. Truth they ſeldom hear; faults they have none. Every thing that they ſay and do is admired, their paſſions all gratified, their humors all indulged; and generally the higher they are born, the worſe they are educated: inſomuch that of nobles and of great men it is not to be wondered that ſo many are ſo bad, but that they are not really worſe than they are. Will not the country afford as melancholy inſtances of the ſons of good families there, trained up among dogs and horſes, inured to ſports and diverſions? and ſo they live in the world with very little more ſenſe of religion,

and depart out of it very little wiſer or better than the animals in whom is all their delight. Though they cannot properly be called ſpeculative unbelievers (for they ſeldom or never think about the matter) yet are they truly practical unbelievers, and live as without God in the world.

" Train up a child in the way he ſhould go," ſays the wiſeſt of men, (Prov. XXII. 6.) " and when he is old he will not depart from " it." The (2) caſk will long retain the ſavor of the liquor with which it was firſt ſeaſoned. The good ſeed, that is ſown in youth, will " take root downward and bear fruit upward" in a riper age. But is all poſſible care taken now to inſtil principles of religion into the minds of youth, while they are yet tender and ſuſceptible of the beſt or worſt impreſſions? The time and attention which are employed, are they not employed more about their learning than their morals, more to inſtruct the tongue than improve the heart, more for ornament and oſtentation than for uſe and edification? *Good breeding* is a thing much commended indeed, but what is it that generally paſſeth now under that denomination? Is it not ſomewhat that is founded more in aſſurance and confidence than modeſty and ingenuity of nature, that depends more on exterior than interior accompliſhments, that conſiſts more in a genteel eaſy carriage of body than a right frame and temper of mind? Is it not principally to regard appearances, to be at any rate in the faſhion, to ſacrifice truth and ſincerity to ceremony and compliment, to pleaſe men rather than God, and to be more ſollicitous and curious about their dreſs and their perſon than their underſtanding and their ſoul? An eminent inſtance of this we have in the letters of a late nobleman to his ſon, wherein a great deal is ſaid to recommend the *graces*, but they are made to conſiſt with the worſt ſort of gallantry, with the lewdeſt baſeſt and moſt immoral actions. How different from this is the advice of Cicero to his ſon in his excellent book of Offices? He commends equally what is graceful and becoming; but his grace is virtue, and he declares expreſly that (3) what is becoming is honeſt, and what is honeſt is becoming. The Heathen appears the better Chriſtian of the two, and more worthy of the kingdom of God.

(2) Quo ſemel eſt imbuta recens ſervabit odorem
Teſta diu. Horace.

Even

Even where ſome care is taken to ſeaſon the minds of children with principles of religion, yet to whom uſually is that truſt committed? Is every mother and every nurſe capable of executing it properly; or do they not often inculcate their own abſurd notions, mingle truth with falſhood, and blend ſuperſtition and religion together? When perſons have been thus principled in their youth, have they always ſenſe and judgment enough to diſtinguiſh afterwards what is right and what is wrong; or do they not many times reject the good principles with the bad, perceiving part to be falſe conclude that the whole is ſo, and rooting up the tares root up alſo the wheat with them? And then how mightily do they applaud themſelves for having overcome theſe religious fears and terrors, for (4) having extirpated old women's notions out of their breaſts, and laugh at all religion as ſuperſtition, and extremely pity the weakneſs and credulity of thoſe reſigned poor creatures, who believe as their mothers and grandmothers have taught them? Though Solomon begins his proverbs with this memorable exhortation, (Prov. I. 8.) "My ſon hear the inſtruction of thy father, and forſake "not the law of thy mother:" and it was (2 Tim. I. 5. III. 15.) his "grandmother Lois" and his "mother Eunice" who firſt inſtructed Timothy in the faith, ſo that "from a child he knew the holy "ſcriptures."

In a more public education there is not perhaps that regard had to morals, there is not that ſtrict diſciplin, that diſcrimination of virtue and vice, which there might be and indeed ought to be; but is the matter mended by ſending our youth abroad and educating them in foreign countries? Travel is certainly of the greateſt uſe and advantage, to open and inlarge the mind; to learn languages; to know the world and mankind, the various manners, cuſtoms, and policies of various nations: but as it may be the ſource of the greateſt good, may it not alſo prove the ſource of the greateſt evil, and ſpoil ſome as it improves others? Every young gentleman of fortune almoſt is ſent to travel, as a neceſſary part of good breeding; but hath every one an

(3) Quod decet, honeſtum eſt; et quod honeſtum eſt, decet. Offic. I. 27.

(4) Veteres avias tibi de pulmone revello. Perſius.

underſtand-

underſtanding and abilities capable of improvement by travel, or would it not be more for their country's honor as well as their own, if many were detained at home who only expoſe themſelves abroad. And they who may be fit and proper to go abroad, yet are they ſent abroad at the moſt fit and proper time? Will they be likely to make the beſt obſervations and the moſt improvements in the heat and hurry and vanity of youth, or when they come to maturer judgment and riper years? The great men of antiquity traveled indeed for knowlege, but they traveled when they were *men*; and what can be expected of *boys* in a foreign country when they are ſtrangers in their own? Are they proper judges of the curioſities and antiquities of every place where they come? Are they competent maſters of the different laws and conſtitutions of government of the different countries where they ſojourn? Or is it not more commonly the caſe, that all they learn in their travels is perhaps ſomewhat of the languages and more of the fopperies and vices; and return to their native country with their character loſt, their fortune ruined, their conſtitution broken, their mind debauched, and either made converts to a falſe religion or of no religion at all. By the deſuetude and diſuſe for ſo many years of the worſhip of their own country, they may grow forgetful and negligent of that, and in time of all other worſhip. In ſome places the public profeſſion of ſo many religions may render them indifferent to all religion. In others the magnificence and ſplendor of the Church of Rome may dazzle their eyes, pervert their minds, and make them proſelytes to that communion; or with all that pomp and pageantry they may grow ſick of all worſhip and devotion, ſeeing the cheat and farce of that religion they may imagin all religion to be a cheat and a farce, and fancy prieſts and prieſtcraft to be the ſame in every church and every nation. There were two of our young Princes (for I would not deſcend to lower inſtances) whom the neceſſity of the times conſtrained to live abroad ſeveral years in Popiſh countries: And what was the conſequence? they both returned poſſeſſed with notions of arbitrary power, both abandoned to their pleaſures and to their vices; the one became a profeſſed bigot and agent for the Church of Rome, the other if a Chriſtian a Papiſt,

Papiſt, but more probably no Chriſtian; for (5) a noble author, who knew him very well and was by no means prejudiced againſt him, aſſures us that "as to his religion it was more deiſm than popery."

I would not be underſtood in any thing that is ſaid abſolutely to condemn travel, for I know nothing that giveth one man the advantage more over another, or is a nobler method of improvement to thoſe who are of years and underſtanding to make a proper uſe of it: And neither would I be thought to include all gentlemen who have traveled in this cenſure, there being ſeveral illuſtrious examples to the contrary, who ſhow in the greateſt perfection the manifold advantages of having ſeen the world: but ſurely a great deal depends upon the right timing of this as well as of other things, and it is rather for the accompliſhing of men than for the educating of youth. If it be a partiality, it is however a laudable partiality, for Engliſhmen to prefer an education in their own country to one entirely foreign; and for the ſucceſs of both let us only appeal to fact and experience, whether moſt of the greateſt men who have at any time appeared, or now appear in this theatre of the world, who have at any time made or now make the moſt conſpicuous figure in public or private life, in the commonwealth of men or the commonwealth of letters, have not been bred up in our own ſchools and univerſities. Some few inſtances there may be perhaps on the other ſide, as great Geniuſes will ſhine through every thing; but I am ſure the generality of examples, with regard to their learning and accompliſhments as well as with regard to their faith and morals, will rather diſſuade than encourage that method of education.

II. Another cauſe of the infidelity of the preſent age we conceive to be the *learning that is now moſt in vogue*. The vanity peculiar to ſome men to fancy that they are wiſer than all others is become the general vanity of the age to imagin that they know more than all who went before them, no times were ever ſo learned or polite as the preſent; and it is time for them therefore to deviate from the common road of thinking, it would be a diſparagement for perſons of their ſuperior knowlege to walk on ſtill in the ſame paths with their credulous

(5) Earl of Mulgrave Duke of Buckingham.

fore-

foreſathers. Trifling modern authors are therefore preferred before the wiſe Ancients. The tinſel of France is more valued than all the bullion of old Greece and Rome. In the mean while the oracles of God are moſt ſhamefully neglected. They are not read and ſtudied with the regard that they would deſerve if they were mere human compoſitions.

As many regard the Scripture too little, there are ſome who attribute to it too much, and not content with having it to be (what it was intended) a rule of faith and manners, will have it alſo to be (what it was not intended) a repoſitory of all true ſcience and philoſophy. They therefore diſcover meanings contrary to all the rules of grammar, criticiſm, and good ſenſe. They tranſvert the plaineſt things into types and figures. They deſpiſe the letter, and are led away by I know not what ſpirit. They depreciate the moral duties, and magnify a myſterious inſtead of a rational faith. They eſteem themſelves the only true believers, and treat all others as half-chriſtians at beſt: and ſo turn the heads of the brethren and their own, and beget fanaticiſm and madneſs in ſome, ſceptiſm and infidelity in others.

Nay it would be well if men had as much virtue and religion, as even the Heathen philoſophers and moraliſts might teach them; but theſe muſt give place to memoirs, romances, and all ſuch reading as in better times was never read. Our fine gentlemen read not now for improvement (for of that they think they have no want or occaſion) but purely for a little amuſement and to kill time; and their reading, if it hath any tendency, tendeth to debauch their morals, and debaſe their nature, rather than to make them wiſer or better. They not only neglect the treaſures of ancient learning, but prefer even the ſcum of the modern. Their favorite authors are thoſe who draw the worſt pictures of human life and repreſent men and manners in the moſt diſagreeable light, not thoſe who ſet before us the dignity of human nature, and animate us to live up to it. Their taſte is more for a looſe licentious ſtile and manner of writing than for chaſtneſs of thought and decency of expreſſion. A bold jeſt on religion weigheth more in their unequal balance than a thouſand arguments for it. Books and pamphlets

pamphlets which are written ever ſo ill againſt the truth they buy up with much more eagerneſs than thoſe which are written ever ſo well in defenſe of it. They read all on one ſide and none on the other; and really take more pains to become infidels than would be neceſſary to confirm any man in the faith.

Such for the moſt part are their ſtudies, and what then are their relaxations and amuſements as they eſteem them? The ſtage under proper regulations might contribute much to the reformation of mankind, and advancement of piety and virtue; and this effect it had in the times of the old Greeks and Romans, plays being then if I may ſo ſpeak their *ſermons*, and the beſt public lectures which they had of morality and religion. The compariſon of the ancient dramatic pieces with the modern may really make us aſhamed to ſee how much more refined and elegant the Heathens were in their repreſentations than we are who call ourſelves Chriſtians. But plays, even the beſt of them, cannot draw together a full audience without ſome additional *entertainment* as it is called, which deſtroys all the good effects of them. If operas have any thing better than mere ſound to recommend them, let their admirers and advocates declare; it cannot be pretended, that they contribute ought to the purity of our morals, or to the improvement of our underſtandings. But as if theſe diverſions were not ſufficient, as if the hours were not late enough, nor the circle of pleaſures yet complete, there are ſome of both ſexes who reſort after all to gaming tables or to midnight balls and maſquerades, perverting even the courſe of nature, and changing night into day and day into night.

But neither is this all that I intended. The preſent age you ſay is a learned age, the night of ignorance is paſt, and theſe are now days of knowlege; but for this very reaſon may not that be applied to us now, which was ſaid by our Saviour to the Phariſees of old, (John IX. 41.) "If ye were blind ye ſhould have no ſin; but now ye ſay We ſee, "therefore your ſin remaineth?" It is true the arts and ſciences are more generally underſtood, whether they are better underſtood is a queſtion. Our knowlege was perhaps as great formerly, but then it was in fewer hands, now it may be more equally diffuſed over the

nation. Some particular perſons might know more then, as the nation in general may know more now. It is now no rarity for a man to be a maſter of numbers. Mathematics are more ſtudied. Mechanics are better underſtood. Metaphyſics are almoſt become faſhionable reading. Lectures of philoſophy are more frequented; the veil is taken from the face of nature, and there is ſcarce a gentleman unleſs very ignorant indeed, who hath not ſome notion of the ſyſtem of the heavens above and of the theory of the earth beneath. And this knowlege is without doubt highly commendable, and can never be too much proſecuted and encouraged. But here begins my complaint. This knowlege is not proſecuted enough, or is not proſecuted as it ought to be. They who are maſters of numbers apply their ſkill more to brokage, the valuing of lives and calculating of chances, than (6) to learn the numbers and meaſures of true life; and though they may calculate well for time, yet they reckon ill for eternity. They who are accuſtomed to mathematical demonſtrations, expect the like exactneſs the like certainty in things which will not admit of it as in thoſe which will, and in ſhort would have all faith to be ſcience, and all fact to be demonſtration. They who would be reputed acute metaphyſicians, inſtead of applying their reaſon and their logic to inveſtigate abſtruſe and illuſtrate obſcure truths, pervert their talents to darken the cleareſt and to confound the plaineſt propoſitions; diſtinguiſh, refine, and ſuttlelize to ſuch a degree, that they loſe ſight of things in the maze of words; affect not truth ſo much as novelty and paradox, controvert the moſt ſelf-evident axioms, contradict our very ſenſes, and plunging beyond the depths of human underſtanding are ſwallowed up at laſt in the abyſs of ſcepticiſm and infidelity. They who have a ſmattering of philoſophy are always apt to imagin that they know more than they really do, and attribute too much to ſecond cauſes and too little to the firſt. And if the apoſtle found it neceſſary to make ſuch exhortations as theſe, (Col. II. 8.) " Beware leſt " any man ſpoil you through philoſophy and vain deceit, after the

(6) —— veræ numeroſque modoſque ediſcere vitæ. Hor.

" tradition

" tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after " Chriſt:" (1 Tim. VI. 20, 21.) " O Timothy keep that which is " committed to thy truſt, avoiding profane and vain bablings and op- " poſitions of ſcience falſely ſo called, which ſome profeſſing have " erred concerning the faith:" If the apoſtle, I ſay found ſuch exhortations to be neceſſary in his days, how much more neceſſary are they in theſe, when ſo many are maſters and ſo few proficients; when ſo many imagin themſelves to be ſomething, and are really and truly nothing? Your ſmatterers in ſcience are always your unbelievers. Perſons ſo ſingular (as they fancy themſelves) in their knowlege, muſt be as ſingular in their opinions. Whereas the greateſt philoſophers (as I have obſerved elſewhere, and ſcruple not to ſay it again) (7) thoſe who have done honor to the nation, done honor to human nature itſelf, have been hearty profeſſors and practiſers of religion, have diſtinguiſhed themſelves by their theological as well as by their philoſophical writings, have ſtudied the word of God as well as the works of God, and have left behind them comments on ſeveral parts of ſcripture. So true is the obſervation of the Lord Bacon, one of the illuſtrious perſons here intended, " A little philoſophy inclineth man's mind to " atheiſm, but depth in philoſophy bringeth men's minds about to " religion."

III. The third cauſe that we aſſigned of the infidelity of the preſent age was the *degeneracy* of men's *manners*; for our manners have an influence upon our faith, as well as our faith upon our manners. Men are not eaſily brought to believe a thing to be true, when it is for their intereſt that it ſhould be falſe. It is no wonder therefore that they are againſt religion, when religion is againſt them and their practices. Not that we conceive the age to be ſo much worſe than all others; but as all immorality hath a tendency to infidelity, ſo more eſpecially have thoſe which are now the faſhionable and reigning vices. In an age of novelty and ſingularity, when ſo many admire every thing that is new becauſe it is new, and explode every thing that is old only becauſe it is old, how ſhould they (Jer. VI. 16.) " ſtand in the ways and ſee,

(7) Bacon, Boyle, Locke, Newton.

" and aſk for the old paths where is the good way, and walk therein?" In an age of pride and vanity, when ſo many idolize their own reaſon, and are ſelf-ſufficient in their own eyes how weak and deſpicable ſoever they are in the opinion of others; how ſhould they (2 Cor. X. 5.) " caſt down" their " imaginations and every high thing that " exalteth itſelf againſt the knowlege of God, and bring into captivity " every thought to the obedience of Chriſt?" In an age of luxury and pleaſure, when ſo many regard nothing but their own gratification and indulgence, and run into all the riot and exceſs of which their condition is capable, how ſhould they receive and own for their maſter one who hath declared (Luke IX. 23.) " If any man will come after " me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs daily and follow " me?" In an age of extravagance and profuſion, when ſo many live above their income, and are as avaricious in getting, as they are laviſh in ſpending; how ſhould they preſerve their faith inviolate to God, or how abound in charity to men? In an age of venality and corruption, when public ſpirit is only private gain, is it to be wondered that ſo many part with their religion, when they would even ſell themſelves; and ſeveral perhaps of thoſe, who would be thought more virtuous and public-ſpirited, have only ſet an higher value upon themſelves, have only ſo much more virtue as they have more pride, no one having as yet come up to their price? In an age of licentiouſneſs and wickedneſs, when all law and lawful authority are trampled under foot, when men " uſe their liberty for a cloak of maliciouſneſs, deſpiſe domi- " nion, and ſpeak evil of dignities;" how ſhould they " ſubmit " themſelves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's ſake," or how " render unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's, and unto God the " things that are God's?"

Such is the nature of our diſeaſe, and all proper remedies are neglected, as the reading of good books at home, and pious inſtructions abroad, the private devotion of the cloſet, and the public ſervice of the church. The neglect of public worſhip, I believe, was never ſo general in any age or nation that made profeſſion of Chriſtianity, or indeed of any religion. And what can be the reaſon of it? Have they lately

lately made any ſurpriſing diſcoveries that Chriſtianity is really an impoſture? Such things are much more eaſily ſaid than proved, and all attempts to prove them they will find to be "kicking againſt the "pricks." But if Chriſtianity was proved to be an impoſture, yet there is ſtill a public worſhip due to the ſupreme being, unleſs they will renounce natural religion as well as revealed, and deny God to be their creator and preſerver as well as their ſaviour and redeemer. But whether infidelity is a cauſe or not, it is certainly an effect of the neglect of public worſhip; as it is not unuſual for one thing at the ſame time to be both the cauſe and effect of another. Infidelity may occaſion the neglect of public worſhip, and the neglect of public worſhip may again occaſion more infidelity; for the beſt impreſſions will wear away, if not frequently renewed. The knowlege of divine things, as well as every human art and ſcience, will be forgotten and loſt without continual practice and exerciſe. The mind by not being accuſtomed to devotion will at laſt become incapable of devotion. The holy flame muſt conſtantly be kept alive, or it will be extinguiſhed. How indeed ſhould they ever "grow in grace and the knowlege of our Lord "and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt," who refuſe the means which are neceſſary to that end? They muſt not only not grow better, but in the natural courſe of things muſt wax worſe and worſe. The life of an atheiſt will eaſily induce the opinions of an atheiſt; and when men live without religion as if there was no God, the next ſtep is if not to believe, yet at leaſt to wiſh that there was none.

Nor is it only faſhionable as I may ſay, to neglect the public worſhip of God, but alſo to baniſh every thing ſerious and ſacred as much as may be out of private converſation. How indeed ſhould there be room for religious diſcourſe, when gaming in a higher or lower degree ingroſſeth ſo much time and furniſheth out the principal entertainment? The politeſt company (as they eſteem themſelves) can hardly paſs an evening or any time together, ſo barren are they of every thing that is improving and entertaining to each other, without ſupplying the want of other diſcourſe with play and ſome ſuch amuſements, as exclude not only all religious but all rational converſation. So far are they

they from ever mentioning any thing of religion, that a man would go near to expoſe himſelf for a weak ſuperſtitious creature, who ſhould venture ſo much as to inſinuate it in ſuch company. If religion and the word of God are ever mentioned there, they are mentioned only to be ridiculed and blaſphemed. In the former part of the laſt century we were in the contrary extreme, every thing then wore the face of religion, and the current language of the times was the phraſes and idioms of ſcripture; but ſurfeited of that hypocriſy we could not preſerve a medium, but fell into this other extreme of irreligion, and in this we have ever ſince continued: inſomuch that now we are ſo far from affecting any thing of goodneſs, that it is eſteemed a mark of vivacity and ſpirit to be diſſolute and profane; and inſtead of appearing better, men are generally ambitious to be thought worſe than they really are. Then they "had a form of godlineſs, but denied the power "thereof;" now they have neither the power, nor ſo much as the form.

But it is no wonder, that men diſcourſe ſo little about religion, when it is ſo little in all their thoughts. They are as ſupercilious and poſitive as if they had thought never ſo much, and at the ſame time as ignorant and prejudiced as if they had thought never ſo little. It is juſt as the pſalmiſt ſays, (Pſal. X. 4.) "The wicked through the "pride of his countenance will not ſeek after God, God is not in all "his thoughts." Indeed the men of this ſort are commonly called *free-thinkers*, but it is a ſtrange abuſe of language to proſtitute ſo glorious a name to ſo unworthy a ſubject. The fault of the age is want of thinking, and not their thinking freely, which is the nobleſt prerogative of rational creatures. They are not free-thinkers but only free-livers. Slaves to the worſt of maſters, ſlaves to their luſts and vices, how ſhould they think freely, (Eph. IV. 18, 19.) "having the un-"derſtanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through "the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their heart; "who being paſt feeling, have given themſelves over to laſciviouſneſs "to work all uncleanneſs with greedineſs."

IV.

IV. The laſt cauſe that we aſſigned of the infidelity of the preſent age was the *neglects* and *omiſſions*, not to ſay the *faults*, of ſuperior perſons and thoſe who ſhould ſet a better example. Our laws are all on the ſide of religion; the State ſupports the Church as the Church the State: but I wiſh there is not too much truth in that ſarcaſtical reflection commonly made upon us by foreigners, that we enact indeed the beſt laws, but obſerve and execute them the worſt of any people in the world. All our ſumptuary laws, our laws againſt bribery, againſt gaming, againſt duelling, againſt drunkenneſs, againſt ſwearing, what have they profited, what have they availed, unleſs it be to ſhow how much ſtronger and more powerful luxury, and corruption, and avarice, and revenge, and debauchery and profaneneſs are than laws with all their penalties; and how much more vigilant and active ſome men are to do evil than others to do good? Laws have therefore been ſometimes compared to cobwebs, which catch perhaps the leſſer flies, but the greater break through them. The crown indeed hath been graciouſly pleaſed to interpoſe frequently in the cauſe of virtue and religion, and ſeveral proclamations have been iſſued from time to time for putting the laws in execution againſt blaſphemy and profaneneſs of every kind: But are we much the better for them? has all the regard been paid to them that is due to ſo great an authority? or have they not been looked upon more as matters of form, and neglected accordingly? In ſhort government is too relaxed and gentle. All authority human and divine are equally ſet at nought, and men neither "fear God," nor "honor the king." It muſt be admitted indeed that at this time we have a King and Queen upon the throne, who are ſhining patterns of virtue to all their ſubjects. It would be happy, if all their ſervants, magiſtrates and miniſters, were but half as good as themſelves. Formerly it was an obſervation that the whole world was compoſed to the example of the Sovran,

Regis ad exemplum totus componitur orbis:

but alas, the effect is quite contrary now, and a ſtronger contraſt and oppoſition there cannot be than between the virtues of the Prince and the

the licentious and profligate manners of the people. But men ſhould be compelled to obey for "wrath," if they will not obey "for con-"ſcience ſake;" for the magiſtrate (Rom. XIII. 4.) "beareth not "the ſword in vain, for he is the miniſter of God, a revenger to exe-"cute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

But are ſuperior perſons and magiſtrates only remiſs and negligent in putting the laws in execution? Are not ſome alſo very deficient and blameable in ſetting an example, which is a ſort of law to their inferiors? There was a time (our forefathers ſaw it) when maſters of families ſummoned all their domeſtics to morning and evening prayers, which they conſtantly read themſelves if they had no chaplain in the family, and on the Lord's day went regularly to the houſe of God at the head of their children and ſervants, living themſelves in the fear of the Lord, and like faithful Abraham, (Gen. XVIII. 19.) "com-"manding their children and their houſeholds after them to keep the "way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment." But how rare are ſuch examples now grown, and how different from this is the conduct of many and ſome of the greateſt families? where they are regular in nothing but their irregularity; no care is taken of the ſervants religion, but they are ſuffered in this reſpect to live every one as he pleaſeth, and to do what is right in his own eyes. And no wonder the maſter is ſo indifferent about his ſervants religion, when he hath ſo little of his own; when even grace before and after meat is baniſhed from the greateſt and moſt plentiful tables; that ſhort form of prayer and thankſgiving, which has conſtantly been in uſe in all ages and nations, is now laid aſide at laſt among Chriſtians; ſo much have the Epicures principles as well as his practices, his irreligion as well as his luxury prevailed among us. Nay it is well, as things are at preſent, if the maſter is not doubly criminal, not only in ſins of omiſſion but likewiſe in ſins of commiſſion, not only in not ſetting a good example to reform the family but in ſetting a bad one to debauch them. And can we wonder then, that among the inferior part of mankind there is ſo little of the form, and leſs of the practice of true religion? And with what grace can you who are a maſter complain of the negligence

and

and badneſs of ſervants, when you ſet them no better an example? How can you expect that they ſhould be faithful in their duty to their maſter on earth, when you yourſelf are ſo notoriouſly deficient in your duty to your maſter who is in heaven?

All people naturally imitate the manners of their ſuperiors, form themſelves as much as they can upon their model, caſt themſelves as much as they can into their mold; and of ſuch influence and efficacy are great examples, that they have a power of making either virtue and religion or vice and irreligion faſhionable. Great lawyers and great phyſicians through the multiplicity of buſineſs cannot frequent the houſe of God, ſo often perhaps as they would, at leaſt they cannot ſo often as they ſhould; and therefore little lawyers and little phyſicians ſtay away too purely out of affectation, though they have not buſineſs, yet that they may be thought to have it, and be reputed more conſiderable than they really are. The general is grown old in foppery and profaneneſs, in lewdneſs and atheiſm, and therefore the ſubaltern copies after his manners; and whether he reſembles him in any thing elſe or not, is ſure to reſemble him in his vices. There uſed to be the moſt virtue and religion in the middle ſtate and condition of life; but how can the middle remain ſound when the extremes are corrupted? It is even viſible how all parts are infected by the contagion of ſuperior examples, ſo that the complaint formerly made by the prophet Iſaiah is no leſs applicable to the preſent times, (Iſa. I. 5, 6.) "The whole "head is ſick, and the whole heart faint: From the ſole of the "foot even unto the head, there is no ſoundneſs in it; but wounds, "and bruiſes, and putrifying ſores."

They too who are religious themſelves, yet do not always recommend religion to others; but ſometimes by their odd conduct and behaviour deter men rather from it than invite them to it. Some are too ſtrict and rigid, are "righteous overmuch," as Solomon expreſſeth it, (Eccleſ. VII. 16.) are puffed up with ſpiritual pride, and thank God that they are not as other men are; having made fewer ſlips themſelves have leſs condeſcenſion and compaſſion for the failings of others, and through a natural ſourneſs and moroſeneſs of temper ex-

hibit religion as the ſevereſt and moſt intractable inſtead of the ſweeteſt and moſt amiable thing in the world. Others have the *innocence* of the *dove* without the *wiſdom* of the *ſerpent*, are of a better temper than underſtanding, have more devotion than diſcretion, and thereby expoſe themſelves and (what is worſe) religion on their account to the ſcornings of the ſcorners. Others again are of an infirm conſtitution and melancholy complexion, ſee every thing in the worſt light, are "afraid where no fear is," and ſo make religion appear the terror and burden inſtead of what it really is the comfort and delight of life. In a word the firſt ſort repreſent religion as a moroſe thing, the ſecond as a weak thing, the third as a melancholy thing; and will not ſome men think ſuch religion worſe than no religion.

But are all teachers and miniſters themſelves without failings? may ſome men perhaps ſay. Are there no infidels among them, or are all others to be taxed and cenſured, and theſe only to be ſpared? We wiſh indeed from our ſoul that all who preach the goſpel would live according to the goſpel; but alas! (Rom. IX. 6, 7.) "they are not all Iſ-"rael which are of Iſrael, neither becauſe they are the ſeed of Abra-"ham are they all children." They are not all like Simon ſon of Onias (Ecclus L. 11.) "who made the garment of holineſs honor-"able:" and a few who are wicked do infinitely more harm to religion, than many others can do good; and as it is recorded of the ſons of Eli, (1 Sam. II. 17, 24.) they "make the Lord's people to tranſ-"greſs," they "make the offering of the Lord to be abhorred." If we would all, after the example of the apoſtle, (2 Cor. IV. 5.) "preach not ourſelves but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord:" If we would make the ſcripture our rule of faith, ſubmitting our reaſon to infinite reaſon, and not pretending to be wiſe above what is written: If none would ſubſcribe one thing and profeſs and teach another: If none would cry up morality to the undervaluing of faith, or extol faith to the depreciating of morality: If none would affect popularity by their prayers and their preaching, and advance impracticable unintelligible notions of mortification and ſelf-denial, of regeneration and the new birth, of grace and the ſpirit, ſuch as muſt make men either enthuſiaſts

ſiaſts or atheiſts: If we would amend our doctrins in theſe reſpects, and reform our lives in others: If we would not upon every occaſion ſhow ourſelves of like paſſions and infirmities with other men: If we would mix leſs in the gaieties and pleaſures of the world, and live more grave and retired, as becometh men profeſſing godlineſs: If the young and unbeneficed would not be too forward and eager to marry, and thereby cramp their genius, and reduce themſelves to neceſſity and contempt: If ſome were not ſo litigious and tenacious of their leaſt rights and privileges, and others were not ſo graſping and ingroſſing of pluralities and riches: If we were all in general more moderate in our worldly purſuits; leſs ſervile and cringing, more free and independent; leſs concerned and buſied in temporal affairs, and more intent and devoted to ſpiritual: If theſe I ſay and the like faults and errors were reformed and amended in our lives and doctrins, then might we hope to diſarm malice and infidelity of all their objections; then might thoſe who ſeek occaſion againſt us find no occaſion; and (2 Pet. II. 12.) " whereas they ſpeak againſt us as evil doers, they " might by our good works which they ſhould behold glorify God in " the day of viſitation." One (8) touches theſe things unwillingly as wounds, but unleſs they are handled, they cannot be healed. As this is ſpoken not out of a ſpirit of cenſure and contradiction, but purely with a benevolent diſpoſition and a good intention, I hope it will be received with candor; for as Solomon ſaith, (Prov. XXVII. 5, 6.) " Open rebuke is better than ſecret love, faithful are the wounds " of a friend, but the kiſſes of an enemy are deceitful."

After all what would the promoters of infidelity have, or what is their deſign and deſire? Would they baniſh all religion? but then they muſt baniſh together with it all arts and ſciences, all laws and government; for where is no religion, there the people are, there they muſt be brutes and ſavages. Would they then eſtabliſh natural religion as the religion of the country? but natural religion hath never yet ſubſiſted nor can ſubſiſt as a national religion without ſome revelation true or pretended. Something or other is wanted to ſupply its deficiencies,

(8) Invitus ea tanquam vulnera attingo; ſed niſi tacta tractataque ſint, ſanari non poſſunt. Livy.

wanted even by philoſophers, and much more by the generality of mankind; and where they have not purer and more genuin ore, they will always make uſe of baſer money and counterfeits; where they have not received a true revelation from God, they will embrace a falſe one from men. If infidelity therefore ſhould prevail univerſally, yet the nation could not long reſt there, and moſt probably might relapſe into popery, it being natural for men to run from one extreme to another, from infidelity to credulity, from irreligion to ſuperſtition. (9) Hoc Ithacus velit. It is the very thing that the Biſhop of Rome would deſire; and if they were retained in his ſervice, they could not more effectually promote his intereſt. They may boaſt of free thinking, but they are no better than factors for popery; and while they pretend to liberty, they are really advocates for ſlavery, and ſervants of corruption.

But notwithſtanding the great defection and depravity of mankind, ſtill let us (Heb. X. 23, 25.) " hold faſt the profeſſion of our faith " without wavering, not forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves toge- " ther, as the manner is" of too many among us. Let us rather be religious with a few, than (Exod. XXIII. 2.) " follow a multitude to " do evil." Singularity indeed is not always to be commended, in many caſes it is a ſign of weakneſs or obſtinacy; but it is glorious to be ſingular in the cauſe of God, in the cauſe of piety and religion. To be religious in times of general impiety and profaneneſs is doubly religious. It is heroic faith; and as the merit is greater, greater will be the reward. Others muſt determin for themſelves what religion they will be of, or whether they will be of any religion; for it is for their life, it is for their ſoul that they determin: but for ourſelves, let every one of us make the ſame pious reſolution with Joſhua (XXIV. 15.) " Chooſe you whom you will ſerve, but as for me and my houſe " we will ſerve the Lord." And for the adverſaries of our moſt holy religion, let us not ceaſe to pray for them in the words of St. Paul, (Eph. I. 17, 18.) " that the God of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the fa- " ther of glory, may give unto them the ſpirit of wiſdom and revela- " tion, in the knowlege of him; the eyes of their underſtanding being

(9) Virgil.

" inlightened,

" inlightened, that they may know what is the hope of his calling,
" and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the ſaints." And for ourſelves let us in the words of St. Jude, (ver. 20, &c.) " build-
" ing up ourſelves on our moſt holy faith, praying in the holy Ghoſt,
" keep ourſelves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our
" Lord Jeſus Chriſt unto eternal life."

DISSERTATION LII.

On the Recompenſe of the Reward.

EXAMPLES often weigh more with men than precepts: and the apoſtle, to encourage the Hebrew Chriſtians to conſtancy and perſeverance in the faith, in the XIth Chapter of his epiſtle, ſetteth before them the examples of ſeveral of their anceſtors, who were illuſtrious inſtances of faith, and in virtue of that achieved wonders, (ver. 33, 34.) " ſubdued kingdoms," as Joſhua, David, &c. " wrought
" righteouſneſs," as Samuel, &c. " obtained promiſes" as David, &c.
" ſtopped the mouths of lions," as Samſon, David, Daniel, " quench-
" ed the violence of fire," as Daniel's companions, " out of weakneſs
" were made ſtrong," as Hezekiah, " waxed valiant in fight, turned
" to flight the armies of the aliens," as ſeveral from Joſhua down to the Maccabees. He inſiſts particularly on the characters of Abraham and Moſes, the one the father of their nation, and the other their legiſlator, two great names for which they profeſſed a more than ordinary regard, and either of which would probably affect and incite them more than any other.

He begins with Moſes from his birth, (ver. 23.) " By faith Moſes
" when he was born, was hid three months of his parents becauſe they
" ſaw

" ſaw he was a proper child, and they were not afraid of the king's " commandment." It is well known that Pharaoh ordered every male, that was born of the Hebrews, to be thrown into the river Nile; but the parents of Moſes ſaw that he was a proper or goodly child; and not only the Scriptures affirm this of Moſes, but Joſephus and Philo report it likewiſe, and (1) Juſtin himſelf celebrates him for his beauty. The parents of Moſes, I ſay, ſaw that he was a child of extraordinary beauty, and therefore they concealed him three months, not only out of parental affection, but alſo hoping that he was the perſon ſent by God for the deliverance of their nation. For that there were ſuch hopes of Moſes, and that there was ſome revelation deſigning him for this work, before God appeared to him in the burning buſh, ſeemeth probable from what is aſſerted by St. Stephen in the Acts of the Apoſtles, (VII. 24, 25.) that when Moſes ſaw an Egyptian ſmiting an Hebrew, " he avenged him that was oppreſſed and ſmote " the Egyptian; for he ſuppoſed his brethren would have underſtood " how that God by his hands would deliver them." Joſephus too (2) informs us expreſly, that God promiſed Amram the father of Moſes in a dream a ſon who ſhould deliver the Hebrews out of Egyptian ſervitude: and therefore the parents were the more ſollicitous for the preſervation of the child; for they feared for him not only as their ſon, but as their ſon who was to arrive at ſuch honor and happineſs. " By " faith Moſes when he was come to years (ver. 24.) refuſed to be called " the ſon of Pharaoh's daughter." We read in Joſephus (3), a ſtory perhaps invented to do Moſes honor, that when Pharaoh's daughter preſented Moſes to her father, ſhe preſented him as her ſon and his ſucceſſor in the kingdom; the king received the boy in his arms and put his diadem on his head, but Moſes threw it to the ground, and ſtamped upon it with his feet. But he was now " come to years," he was now " full forty years old" as St. Stephen expreſſeth it, (Acts VII. 23.) ſo that it was not a ſally of youth, but an act of his ſettled judgment,

(1) Moſes—quem—etiam formæ pulchritudo commendabat. Juſt. Hiſt. Lib. 36. Cap. 2.

(2) —και το δεον ἐλι μειζον δια την τε ονειρε προρρησιν αυτοις συνιζαλο· ε γαρ ὡς περι παιδον μο-

judgment, that he " refuſed to be called the ſon of Pharaoh's daugh-
" ter, (ver. 25.) chooſing rather to ſuffer affliction with the peo-
" ple of God than to enjoy the pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon, eſteeming
" the reproach of Chriſt," that is the reproach of the people of God, for the people of God are ſometimes in ſcripture called *Chriſt* or anointed; as in the Pſalms, (CV. 15.) " Touch not my CHRISTS or
" anointed, and do my prophets no harm;" and again in Habakkuk, (III. 13.) " Thou wenteſt forth for the ſalvation of thy people,
" even for ſalvation with thy CHRIST or anointed:" And in like manner " eſteeming the reproach of Chriſt" (ver. 26.) is " eſteeming the
" reproach of the people of God greater riches than the treaſures in
" Egypt." And then follows what it was that animated Moſes to make ſo glorious a choice, to prefer affliction and reproach with the people of God to the pleaſures and treaſures of Egypt. " For he had
" reſpect unto the recompenſe of the reward." Of what reward? Not certainly of the earthly Canaan, for he never reached that country, he was only permitted to take a view of it from the top of a mountain; and beſides if he had reached it, that country could never have made him amends for what he had reſigned and left behind him in Egypt. The " recompenſe of the reward" muſt therefore be the reward of another life, and it ſeemeth to be ſomewhat heavenly and eternal, being ſet in oppoſition to the " treaſures in Egypt" and the " pleaſures of ſin for a ſeaſon." It is ſaid of Abraham and the other patriarchs mentioned in this chapter, that they had expectations beyond this life: and can we believe that Moſes was without the ſame extended views, or had not reſpect unto the ſame recompenſe of reward as well as they? It is ſaid of him in the very next verſe, that " he endured as ſeeing him who is inviſible."

The words thus explained naturally yield theſe two obſervations to every one who writeth and indeed to every one who thinketh upon the ſubject; the firſt that the holy men of old times looked not only for temporal promiſes, but had expectations of a reward in another

νον ευλαβεις ησαν, αλλα και ὡς επι μεγεθει τοσαυτης ευδαιμονιας εσομενης. Joſ. Antiq. Lib. 2. Cap. 9. | Edit. Hudſon.
(3) Joſeph. ibid.

life;

life; and the ſecond that it is lawful, in the performance of our duty, to have reſpect unto the recompenſe of the reward. The former we will diſpatch in as few words as poſſible, that we may have the more time to inlarge upon the latter, that being more a point of ſpeculation, and this relating more to practice.

I. Our firſt obſervation is that "the holy men of old times looked "not only for temporal promiſes, but had expectations of a reward "in another life." And this obſervation cannot be thought at all improper or impertinent, it being the doctrin of the Church of England in the ſeventh of her articles of religion. Now I think it is not to be doubted, that when God entered into covenant with Adam after the fall, and promiſed the Meſſiah, he promiſed at the ſame time eternal life in another world. I ſay I think it is not to be doubted, that ſuch a revelation was made, although ſuch a revelation be not expreſſed in the ſhort hiſtory of Moſes. But though perhaps we cannot exactly point out the ſpring-head, yet we may eaſily trace the courſe of the river. St. Paul ſays in his epiſtle to Titus (I. 2.) that "God who "cannot lie promiſed eternal life," προ χρονων αιωνιων, not "before the "world began" as our tranſlation renders the words, for then there were no men to whom ſuch a promiſe could be made; but "before "ſecular times," before the times of jubilees or ages by which the Jews reckoned, as the words ought to be rendered in this and in ſome other places of ſcripture. And in this XIth Chapter of the Epiſtle to the Hebrews, the apoſtle exhibits a large catalogue of ancient heroes and heroines from Abel down to the Maccabees, who triumphed over all the glories and all the afflictions of this life, they were ſo raiſed and animated with the hopes and expectations of another: (ver. 10.) They "looked for a city which hath foundations whoſe builder and "maker is God; (ver. 13, 16.) they confeſſed that they were ſtran-"gers and pilgrims on the earth, and deſire a better country that is an "heavenly; (ver. 35.) they were tortured not accepting deliverance, "that they might obtain a better reſurrection." "Enoch the ſeventh "from Adam," as we learn from St. Jude, (ver. 14.) propheſied of a future judgment "ſaying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thou-

"ſand

" ſand of his ſaints" or angels " to execute judgment upon all:" And he was not only a preacher of a future ſtate, but was himſelf as it were a pledge and earneſt of it, being tranſlated alive from earth to heaven. If there be not abundance of paſſages to this purpoſe in the Law, the reaſon is plain: A future ſtate is not made the ſanction of the Jewiſh law, in order to make the interpoſition of an extraordinary providence more viſible: but ſtill there are ſeveral not obſcure intimations of a future ſtate diſperſed here and there in the law and the prophets. Nothing is eaſier than to multiply quotations, but I will mention only two which are expreſs and full; the one in Eccleſiaſtes (XII. 14.) " God ſhall bring every work into judgment with every ſecret thing, " whether it be good or whether it be evil;" and the other in Daniel, (XII. 2, 3.) " Many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall " awake, ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting " contempt; and they that be wiſe ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the " firmament, and they that turn many to righteouſneſs, as the ſtars " for ever and ever." The belief of a future ſtate ſeemeth all along to have been the national belief of the Jews; and we do not find that any body or party of them ever denied it, till the Sadducees aroſe among them ſome time after their return from the Babyloniſh captivity; a ſect conſiderable perhaps for the men of fortune who were of it, but inconſiderable for its numbers. The ſtream and current of the nation run another way. So that we may very well conclude, as the Church of England doth in her articles; " Wherefore they are not to be " heard, which feign that the old fathers did look only for tranſitory " promiſes." It is true the diſcoveries of this kind are more perfect in the Chriſtian diſpenſation. " Life and immortality" are now " brought to light," as the apoſtle ſpeaketh; (2 Tim. I. 10.) are now more expreſly taught, are now more clearly revealed by Jeſus Chriſt. What was only hope under the law, is certainty and aſſurance under the goſpel. The light that appeared like the morning ſtar before, now beameth out in full effuſion like the ſun at noon day. And thus much for our firſt obſervation.

II. Our ſecond is that "it is lawful in the performance of our duty "to have reſpect unto the recompenſe of the reward." And on this obſervation we will dwell the longer, not only becauſe the other was more a point of ſpeculation as I ſaid, and this relates more to practice; but becauſe it hath been denied, in theſe later as well as in former times, by ſome opinionative men or others; who, ſetting up for a higher ſtrain of virtue and religion than ordinary, pretend that the love of God ought to be the ſole motive of our actions; that we ſhould be virtuous only for virtue's ſake; and that to have reſpect unto the recompenſe of the reward is a legal, and not an evangelical principle, the temper of a ſlave and not of a ſon; we will endevor to ſhow the contrary, and eſtabliſh the truth of our obſervation by authorities of *reaſon*, of *ſcripture*, and of *inconteſtable examples*.

1. It is upon many accounts *reaſonable*, that we ſhould have reſpect unto the recompenſe of the reward. We muſt allow indeed, that it would be greater and nobler, if we were determined only by the nature and reaſon of things; for God himſelf is ſo determined, he hath no ſuperior being to reward him, and yet he is all goodneſs as well as all happineſs. But perhaps no created being whatever is capable of abſtracting from all conſideration of the reward. It may be queſtioned whether even the higheſt orders of angels have not an eye to their own happineſs, and are not moved and animated to their duty by their love of themſelves as well as by their love of God. Thoſe of them who fell will be puniſhed; thoſe who ſtand will be rewarded, and made happier and happier to all eternity. This they muſt know, for this we know; and can we believe, that they are not at all affected by it, and do not regulate their behaviour accordingly? But if it was poſſible for angels to perform their duty without reſpecting the recompenſe of the reward; yet it ſeemeth altogether impoſſible for men: and it will be found really no better than rant and enthuſiaſm to pretend to it. The deſire of happineſs is congenial to the ſoul; and we muſt ceaſe to be, and be caſt again in a new mold, before we can ceaſe to be actuated by it and purſue it one way or other. And indeed without happineſs in view, we ſhall find it extremely difficult to maintain our virtue,

virtue, betrayed as we are by ſo many corrupt inclinations within, and beſieged by ſo many powerful temptations without. The beauty of virtue alone will engage few to wed her without her dowry. How plauſible ſoever it may appear in diſcourſe, it will fail in practice. That virtue is its own reward, that the wiſe man is happy on the rack or in Phalaris his bull, are Stoical extravagancies; and none of thoſe wiſe men as Archbiſhop Tillotſon expreſſeth it, were ever ſuch fools as to try the experiment. In this unequal ſtate virtue is often poor and oppreſſed, and vice lordly and triumphant. The proſpect of the heavenly reward ſeemeth therefore requiſite to ſupport us in our duty; as there would be no running in the race, but for obtaining the prize. And why was ſuch an affection as hope implanted in our ſouls? Was it given never to be exerted? Or is it to be exerted all in the little tranſitory pleaſures of this world, and none of it to be employed on the great and everlaſting happineſs of the world to come? There is nothing certainly in this world, that can fully ſatisfy our hopes; and God never made any affection without an adequate object to anſwer it. And if we have worthy conceptions of the Chriſtian heaven, and do not dream of that bleſſed ſtate as of a Mohammedan paradiſe, to ſeek after heaven is to ſeek after the perfection of virtue; the love of ourſelves is the love of God; and the deſire of our own happineſs is the deſire of his glory. They may be ſeparated perhaps in idea, but in effect they can never be diſtinguiſhed: And what God and the conſtitution of things have thus joined together, let not man pretend to put aſunder.

2. As it is agreeable to reaſon, ſo likewiſe is it to *ſcripture*, that we ſhould have reſpect unto the recompenſe of the reward. The ſcripture is ſo far from condemning it as any thing unlawful, that on the contrary it propoſeth the heavenly reward of virtue as our encouragement to virtue. Paſſages to this purpoſe are as thick ſet in the New Teſtament as ſtars in the heavens; we can now only note a few of the firſt magnitude. Our bleſſed Lord himſelf opens his divine ſermon on the Mount with the beatitudes, and to every virtue he annexeth a ſuitable reward; and in the ſame diſcourſe he teacheth us ſo to give our alms,

ſo to pray, and ſo to faſt, "that our Father which ſeeth in ſecret may "reward us openly." Our Saviour certainly laid ſome ſtreſs upon it, for he repeats the ſame thing three times. After him his apoſtles tread in his ſteps. "He who ſoweth ſparingly," ſays St. Paul, (2 Cor. IX. 6.) "ſhall reap alſo ſparingly, and he who ſoweth bountifully ſhall reap "alſo bountifully," intimating that the greatneſs of our reward ſhall bear proportion to the goodneſs of our work: And in another place (1 Cor. XV. 19.) the ſame apoſtle carries the doctrin ſo far as to ſay, that "if in this life only we have hope in Chriſt, we" Chriſtians "are "of all men moſt miſerable." St. Peter, having recommended the practice of ſeveral virtues, concludes with theſe words ſo very appoſite to my preſent deſign, (2 Pet. I. 10, 11.) "Wherefore the rather, bre- "thren, give diligence to make your calling and election ſure; for if "ye do theſe things ye ſhall never fall; for ſo an entrance ſhall be "miniſtred unto you abundantly, into the everlaſting kingdom of our "Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt." Nay the Scripture not only propoſeth the heavenly reward of virtue for our encouragement to virtue; but even commands us to ſeek it, and inſtead of making it part of our duty not to have reſpect unto it, maketh it plainly a part of our duty to have reſpect unto it. (Matt. VI. 33, 19, 20.) "Seek ye firſt the "kingdom of God," ſaith our Saviour; "Lay not up for yourſelves "treaſures upon earth, but lay up for yourſelves treaſures in heaven:" And St. Paul to the ſame ſenſe, (Col. III. 1, 2.) "Seek thoſe things "which are above, where Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of God; "ſet your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." Theſe are texts, which need no comment or explanation; they ſpeak the thing ſo plainly, that one would wonder how the contrary opinion ſhould ever have prevailed among any who call themſelves Chriſtians.

3. There are not only precepts, but likewiſe *examples* in ſcripture to authorize our having reſpect unto the recompenſe of the reward. There is a great cloud of witneſſes in the chapter under conſideration. "Without faith," ſaith the divine author, (ver. 6.) "it is impoſſible "to pleaſe God;" and what faith is he explains in the next words, "for he that cometh to God muſt believe that he is, and that he is "the

" the rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him." This was the faith that inſpired and animated theſe heroes and heroines of old; and inſtead of being cenſured for it, they are propoſed as patterns for our imitation: (XII. 1.) " Wherefore ſeeing we alſo are compaſſed about " with ſo great a cloud of witneſſes, let us lay aſide every weight, and " the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us." There are not only Jewiſh examples, but alſo the moſt burning and ſhining lights of the Chriſtian world. What was it that ſupported the Proto-martyr St. Stephen ſo glorioufly in his laſt agonies, (Acts VIII. 55.) but the proſpect of " the glory of God and Jeſus ſtanding on the right-hand of God." He had the haven in view, and therefore he bore up againſt the ſtorm with the greater courage. Can we think it beneath us to follow the example of the great apoſtle St. Paul; and doth not He profeſs of himſelf, (Phil. III. 14.) " I preſs toward the mark for the prize of the " high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus?" To give only one inſtance more, but one more worth than all others. Our Saviour himſelf, the teſt and ſtandard of perfection, had reſpect unto the recompenſe of the reward; and in this as well as in other things he left us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps. " Let us therefore run with patience " the race that is ſet before us," as the apoſtle ſpeaketh, (Heb. XII. 1, 2.) " looking unto Jeſus the author and finiſher of our faith, who for " the joy that was ſet before him endured the croſs, deſpiſing the " ſhame, and is ſet down at the right-hand of the throne of God."

The truth of our obſervation, I hope, is ſufficiently eſtabliſhed; and whatever Infidels may ſay on one hand, or Enthuſiaſts on the other, let us never be aſhamed of acting according to nature, and at the ſame time of obeying the commands of ſcripture, and at the ſame time of following the examples of Chriſt and his apoſtles. It may be called the temper of a ſlave and not of a ſon to have reſpect unto the recompenſe of the reward; but we ſee it was the temper of the Son of God himſelf, and (Matt. X. 25.) " it is enough for the diſci- " ple that he be as his maſter, and the ſervant as his lord." It may be called a legal and not an evangelical principle; but we ſee it was before the law as well as under it, and ſince the law as well as before it.

it. It is the grand principle of all ſcripture; and is more properly evangelical than legal, the goſpel being more properly the doctrin of life and immortality. It ſoundeth indeed heroical to profeſs ſo much diſintereſtedneſs, ſuch love and admiration of the beauty of virtue, and ſuch neglect and contempt of the rewards of virtue; but it is againſt nature and common ſenſe, and will be found at the bottom a ſpecious pretext, a ſuttle engin to undermine and blow up virtue by itſelf. The men who talk this language are not at all better than their neighbours; and for the moſt part it beginneth in infidelity and endeth in enthuſiaſm, or beginneth in enthuſiaſm and endeth in infidelity. It was the ſin of our firſt parents, that they aſpired to be "as Gods "knowing good and evil;" and I know not whether this Stoical Sadducaical virtue beareth not ſome reſemblance with their crime, and is not an apple of the ſame tree. It is enough for us to diſcharge our duty in the method and manner that God and nature preſcribe. If we have not wings to fly, we have yet feet to walk. If we cannot ſoar above the highths of all created beings, and be not ſufficient of ourſelves to do all things as of ourſelves, we have yet God's grace to aſſiſt us, and God's reward to encourage us. With theſe the glorious company of apoſtles, the goodly fellowſhip of prophets, the noble army of martyrs achieved wonders formerly; and ſo may we now "be "ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," and take up the triumphant exclamation of St. Paul: (Rom. VIII. 35, &c.) "Who "ſhall ſeparate us from the love of Chriſt? ſhall tribulation, or diſ-"treſs, or perſecution, or famin or nakedneſs, or peril or ſword? "Nay in all theſe things we are more than conquerors through him "that loved us. For I am perſuaded that neither death nor life, "nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things preſent nor "things to come, nor highth nor depth, nor any other creature ſhall "be able to ſeparate us from the love of God which is in Chriſt Jeſus "our Lord." (1 Cor. XV. 58.) "Therefore my beloved brethren, "be ye ſtedfaſt, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the "Lord, foraſmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the "Lord."

DIS-

DISSERTATION LIII.

On the Sin which eaſily beſets us.

WHEN our Saviour, upon a certain occaſion, was exhorting his diſciples to *watch*, it was aſked of him "Lord ſpeakeſt thou "this unto us or even to all?" and Jeſus anſwered "What I ſay un- "to you I ſay unto all Watch." The caſe is the ſame with regard to the other moral precepts of Chriſtianity; for though they may be ſuited to particular times and addreſſed to particular perſons, yet they belong in ſome degree at leaſt, to all times and to all perſons. We have an inſtance of this kind in theſe words of the apoſtle (Heb. XII. 1.) "Let us lay aſide every weight and the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet "us;" which though written on occaſion of the perſecutions then raging againſt the Chriſtians, are yet equally applicable to any reigning ſin of the times, any favorite vice of our own, any criminal darling paſſion or inclination. In the preceding chapter the apoſtle to encourage the Hebrew converts to ſteddineſs and perſeverance in the faith ſetteth before them the examples of the ancient heroes and heroines, who through faith wrought wonders, and became themſelves the wonder of ſucceeding generations. And now in the beginning of this chapter he proceeds to draw his practical concluſions from the foregoing diſcourſe: "Wherefore ſeeing we alſo are compaſſed about with ſo "great a cloud of witneſſes, let us lay aſide every weight and the ſin "which doth ſo eaſily beſet us, and let us run with patience the race "that is ſet before us." The Chriſtian life is not improperly compared to a race, and from thence therefore the metaphors are borrowed, and convey the meaning clear and diſtinct enough, though commentators have raiſed a duſt of criticiſm about the words which we tranſlate "the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us." The phraſe, I think, occurs

curs no where elſe in ſcripture; but after all our diſquiſitions, we ſhall find perhaps, that the ſenſe cannot be better expreſſed, than it is in our tranſlation; "Let us lay aſide every weight and the ſin which "doth ſo eaſily beſet us." The ſin which did moſt eaſily beſet them then was apoſtaſy from the faith, to which they were ſtrongly tempted by reaſon of the perſecutions, then raging againſt the Chriſtians. But God be thanked, that is not the caſe now. We live in the halcyon days of the goſpel, while the proſpect is calm and ſerene about us. The ſin therefore which doth ſo eaſily beſet us, cannot be the ſame which did ſo eaſily beſet them; and without doubt it may be different at different times, and even different in different perſons. It may be proper therefore to obſerve in the firſt place that there is in every man ſome ruling paſſion, ſome "ſin which doth eaſily beſet him;" and then to conſider in the ſecond place how we may get the better of this ruling paſſion, how we may lay this darling ſin aſide. So that the apoſtle's exhortation may be found equally applicable, equally uſeful now as it was then, "Let us lay aſide every weight and the ſin which "doth ſo eaſily beſet us."

I. We may obſerve in the firſt place that there is in every man ſome ruling paſſion, ſome "ſin which doth eaſily beſet him." Human nature is prone to ſin in general, but we are, all of us, liable to ſome ſin in particular. We are hardly more diſtinguiſhable one from another by our features than by our paſſions, ſo that what is a prevailing temptation with one man ſhall have little or no charms in the eyes of another. In ſome men this difference is very obſervable, the ſtream is ſhallow or clear, that we can eaſily ſee to the bottom; in others it runneth deeper or fouler, there is more artifice, more diſguiſe, that we cannot ſo eaſily trace the ſprings and motives of their actions. But the greater ſagacity and experience any one is maſter of, the more originals he will diſcover in the characters of mankind. And no wonder, when there are ſuch various cauſes, that there are ſuch various effects; no wonder that in ſuch diverſity of life there is ſuch diverſity of characters, that one ſin prevails more with one man, another with another. Sin appears in ſo many ſhapes, that it is impoſſible to ſay how

how many ways it may eaſily beſet us. Every thing inherent, every thing extrinſecal may prove the ſource of ſome temptation. Of things inherent we may reckon particularly that nature, ſex, age, health and ſickneſs, beauty and deformity, and the like; of things extrinſecal we may reckon particularly that our country, education, example, our recreation and buſineſs, our ſtate and condition of life, are each of them of great force and efficacy in forming our manners, and may each of them expoſe us to ſome "ſin which doth eaſily beſet "us."

1. Of things inherent, *Nature* certainly maketh wide difference in mens complexions and tempers. So that ſome men, we may obſerve, are naturally prone to anger; they take fire, they kindle upon the leaſt occaſion: Others have not that quickneſs and ſpirit, they lay injuries more to heart, and are more apt to meditate revenge. Some men are ſo ſullen and obſtinate that hardly any perſuaſion can ever move them: Others are ſo fickle and inconſtant, as to be toſſed about with every wind, for want of a proper ballaſt of diſcretion to keep them ſteddy. Some again are eaſily inflamed to love, while ſome are naturally hateful and hated. Others again have more of the cunning of the ſerpent, and are therefore apt to deceive; while others have more of the ſimplicity of the dove, and are therefore liable to be deceived. There is perhaps as great difference in mens ſouls as in their bodies; and every temper hath its proper temptation.—The difference of *ſex* likewiſe creates a difference of manners and inclinations. There is more fire in men, more ſoftneſs in women. Men are more urged on by hopes, women are more reſtrained by fears. Women ſeem more deſigned for domeſtic life and pleaſure, men are more for public life and buſineſs. Men ſeem more inclinable to ſcepticiſm and infidelity, women are more to credulity and ſuperſtition. Men have tongues more formed for flattery, and women have ears. Men perhaps ſooner receive a paſſion, and women perhaps longer retain it. The ſexes are not diſtinguiſhed more by their dreſs than by their manners; ſo that what becomes the one well enough is quite indecent and ſhameful in the other.—Other qualities make us differ from one

another, but the different periods of *age* make us differ even from ourſelves (1). Childhood is entirely given up to little plays and follies, eaſily provoked and as eaſily appeaſed, and changed and changing almoſt every moment. Youth is fond of pleaſures and diverſions, inclined to vice with eaſe, and perſuaded to virtue with difficulty; prodigal of the preſent, and negligent of the future; full of itſelf and regardleſs of every thing beſides; eager to obtain its deſires, and having obtained ſoon groweth weary of them. Manhood is for ſomething more ſolid and ſubſtantial, abandons the flowry paths of pleaſure for riches honor and power, "riſeth up early," and "late taketh reſt, "and eateth the bread of carefulneſs." Old age is buſy in heaping up the means of living, and yet is afraid to live; ſlow to reſolve, cold to execute; pleaſed with few perſons or things, complaining of moſt; grudging pleaſures to others, which it cannot enjoy itſelf; talketh with delight over the days which are paſt, as extravagant in commending them, as ſevere in cenſuring the preſent. And thus it is that age ſhifteth the ſcenes of our deſires and enjoyments. The paſſion of childhood is play; pleaſure, of youth; ambition, of manhood; and avarice, of old age: In every ſtage of life one or other of them eaſily beſets us.—A different temperament and conſtitution of body, *health* and *ſickneſs* differently affect the mind; and betray us often into vain confidence and ſecurity on the one hand, or unreaſonable melancholy and dejection of ſpirits on the other. In health we are not apt to have that tender feeling for others, we are apt to be unthinking and ungrateful for the bleſſing of health itſelf. In ſickneſs we are apt to be froward, impatient, querulous, troubleſome enough by our condition, more troubleſome by our temper. It is certain, good and bad qualities are often conſtitutional. Some vices, like ſome diſeaſes, run in the blood, and eaſily beſet us.—Other qualities, as *beauty* and *deformity* and

(1) Reddere qui voces jam ſcit puer, et pede certo
Signat humum, geſtit paribus colludere, et iram
Colligit ac ponit temerè, et mutatur in horas.
Imberbis juvenis, tandem cuſtode remoto,
Gaudet equis canibuſque et aprici gramine campi,
Cereus in vitiam flecti, monitoribus aſper,
Utilium tardus proviſor, prodigus æris,
Sublimis, cupiduſque, et amata relinquere pernix.

Converſis

and the like, have each alſo their particular temptation. Beauty is liable to pride and vanity, expoſed to flattery and idolized only to be ruined. Deformity is too often addicted to ſpleen and ill-nature, is more crooked in temper than in perſon; and becauſe it cannot appear any thing like a grace, is too apt to turn a ſatir. Though ſometimes a great ſoul lieth under a mean body; as ſometimes on the other hand we have known the face of angels with the temper of furies.

2. Of things extrinſecal our *country* hath great influence over us. There are vices peculiar almoſt to every climate and nation. Ilands and continents, kingdoms and commonwealths are ſubject to their particular diſorders. In former times the pragmaticalneſs and arrogance of a Greek, the treachery and cruelty of a Carthaginian, the effeminacy of an Aſiatic, the ſuperſtition of an Egyptian were almoſt the diſtinguiſhing characteriſtics of their reſpective countries. And now in later times the cruelty of a Turk, and avarice of a Jew, are grown proverbial; ebriety is the vice of the North, laſciviouſneſs of the South. One nation is remarkable for vanity and impertinence, another for ſtatelineſs and formality, a third for its unnatural paſſion and talent at a cloſe revenge; and that we may not too much flatter ourſelves, there hath been ſomething diſtinguiſhed by the name of the *Engliſh malady*. The inſpired writers themſelves ſometimes take notice of this difference in the characters and manners of nations. St. Luke, ſpeaking of the Athenians, obſerves that they (Acts XVII. 21.) "ſpent their time in nothing elſe but either to tell or to hear ſome "new thing." And St. Paul ſtigmatizes the Cretians with this character, from one of their own poets, (Tit. I. 12.) "The Cretians "are always liers, evil beaſts, ſlow bellies."—*Education* too hath great influence over us; and yet perhaps there is no method of education without ſome inconveniences and dangers. Too much liberty and indulgence to children may betray them into licentiouſneſs; and

Converſis ſtudiis ætas, animuſque virilis,
Quærit opes et amicitias, inſervit honori,
Commiſiſſe cavet quod mox mutare laboret.
Multa ſenem circumveniunt incommoda, vel quod
Quærit et inventis miſer abſtinet, ac timet uti,
Vel quod res omnes timide gelidéque miniſtrat,
Dilator, ſpe longus, iners, aviduſque futuri,
Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti
Se puero, caſtigator cenſorque minorum.
Hor. de Art. Poet.

too much reſtraint and ſeverity may break their ſpirits, extinguiſh all ſparks of genius, and make them ſlaves inſtead of ſons. In a private education there cannot be thoſe friendſhips contracted among their equals which are of advantage ever afterwards, there cannot be that ſpirit of emulation, that manly aſſurance and early knowlege of the world. In a public one there cannot be that particular application to their particular parts and capacities, there cannot be that ſtrict watch and guard over their morals, but virtue and innocence are more tempted and expoſed to vice and rudeneſs. Some grow narrow-ſouled pedants by being trained up and living always at home; and others glean up nothing but foreign vices and foreign fopperies by going abroad. Young virtue may be deſtroyed as many ways, as young fruit may be blaſted; and we cannot tell how, or when, or whence, the blaſt may come.—*Example* likewiſe hath a prevailing influence over our minds and manners. Faſhion reconciles men to any thing, be it ever ſo abſurd or unreaſonable. The vices of the court ſpread into the city, and thoſe of the city into the country; thoſe of the nobility infect the gentry, and thoſe of the gentry deſcend to the commonalty. And it would be well, if the circle, as it ſpread wider and wider, grew weaker and weaker; but alas vires acquirit eundo; ſin groweth ſtrong by dilating and ſpreading, and the more are liſted under its banners, the more they confirm themſelves in wickedneſs. Such is the prevailing force and influence of faſhion and cuſtom, that there are times and ages to be characterized for their particular vices, as well as ſingle perſons. And perhaps the preſent age may be diſtinguiſhed from all future generations, as it is from all preceding, by luxury and extravagance, by diſſoluteneſs and diſorder, by liberty in pretence but licentiouſneſs in reality, by infidelity on the one hand, and enthuſiaſm on the other, ſo that true religion, like its divine author, is in danger of being crucified between two thieves.—Neither is there any *vocation* or *buſineſs* of life without ſome ſin or other which "eaſily be-"ſets it." There are frauds in all trades and profeſſions, and the difficulty is to keep ourſelves clear from the contagion, when the general practice hath rendered them familiar, and perhaps our buſineſs,

or

or the profits of our buſineſs, will not be ſo conſiderable without them. John the Baptiſt therefore very fitly cautions his auditors, not only againſt ſin in general, but againſt the ſins of their reſpective callings in particular. (Luke III. 13, 14.) To the publicans, who were uſually great exactors, he ſays, "Exact no more than that which is appointed "to you;" and to the ſoldiers, "Do violence to no man, neither ac- "cuſe any falſly, and be content with your wages."—Neither is there any *ſtate* and *condition* of life whatever without its peculiar temptation. If we are "rich," (Prov. XXX. 9.) the danger is "leſt we be full "and deny the Lord;" and if we are "poor, leſt we ſteal and take "the name of our God in vain." Proſperity ruins perhaps as many as adverſity. As Tacitus ſomewhere obſerves, good fortune often changes a man for the worſe, Veſpaſian only was changed for the better. It would not be a diſagreeable nor unuſeful taſk, to diſſect and anatomize the frauds and vices peculiar to every *vocation* and *buſineſs*, every *ſtate* and *condition*. In all it would appear that we have great reaſon to pray, as our Saviour hath taught us to pray, "Lead us not "into temptation."

II. So many ways a paſſion may gain the aſcendent over us, ſo many ways a ſin may "eaſily beſet us," and by a thouſand more, if you had patience or I had leiſure to diſcuſs and examine them all. But it is time to conſider in the ſecond place how we may get the better of this ruling paſſion, how we may lay this darling ſin aſide, according to the apoſtle's exhortation, "Let us lay aſide every weight and the "ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us." We muſt lay aſide every weight, every ſin in general; but we muſt guard againſt the "ſin which doth "ſo eaſily beſet us" in particular. And to do this effectually it may not be amiſs to obſerve the following rules and directions.

1. We muſt endevor to find out what is our ruling paſſion, what is the ſin which doth ſo eaſily beſet us. For we muſt know the diſtemper, before we can properly apply the cure. *Know thyſelf* was a precept, that even among the Heathens was eſteemed divine. "Know "ye not your own ſelves?" ſaith the apoſtle, (2 Cor. XIII. 5.) "Ex- "amin yourſelves, prove your own ſelves." No glaſs can ſhow your-

ſelves

ſelves to yourſelves like your own conſcience. Conſult with that faithful monitor, and conſider what temptations moſt frequently aſſault you and moſt eaſily foil you; where lieth your ſtrength and where your weakneſs; what are your means and what are your ends. Upon a careful ſurvey of the ſoul the ruling paſſion will come forward and ſtrike your eye, in ſome perhaps more, in ſome leſs, like the principal figure in a picture. The reſt of the paſſions bow to it, like the other ſheaves to the ſheaf of Joſeph. Strike but upon this ſtring, and the ſoul will inſtantly move like an inſtrument in uniſon.

2. After we know wherein our greateſt failing conſiſts, we muſt be particularly careful to watch and avoid the occaſions. We muſt not be "like unto a man," as St. James ſpeaketh, (James I. 23, 24.) "be-"holding his natural face in a glaſs; for he beholdeth himſelf and "goeth his way and ſtraightway forgetteth what manner of man he "was:" but we muſt be like unto a wiſe governor of a town in time of ſiege, who turneth his eyes indeed to all quarters, but guardeth that moſt which is weakeſt, and where the attack will certainly be made. There are tender hours and critical minutes, when virtue ſleepeth and temptation awaketh, and eaſily beſets us; theſe we muſt by all means endevor to divert and employ otherwiſe. There are certain objects and certain company, which inflame our paſſions, and ſollicit and incite us more to ſin than others; theſe we muſt by all means endevor to decline and avoid. To be free from ſin, we muſt ſhun the opportunities and occaſions. As it was ſaid of the Parthians of old, we conquer by flying, our retreat is our victory. And we muſt particularly beware of idleneſs, which is the bane of every virtue and ſource of every vice, which will not only give the ruling paſſion, but every paſſion the advantage over us. Virtues, like fruits, are planted with care; but vices, like weeds, ſpring up of themſelves.

3. We muſt not only carefully avoid the occaſions of the ſin that doth ſo eaſily beſet us; but we muſt alſo learn to deny our affections, if we would ſubdue them; and even to deny them in innocent things, if we would ſubdue them in what is criminal. We muſt get the better of our paſſions, or our paſſions will get the better of us, and lead

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us captive at pleaſure. They always grow by indulgence; but by denying them in leſſer matters, we may be able in time to deny them in greater. Self-denial may be no very pleaſing taſk, but yet it is abſolutely neceſſary. In ſome inſtances it may be like the "cutting off of a "right hand" or the "plucking out of a right eye." But our Saviour himſelf hath determined it to be better for us, (Matt. V. 29.) that "one of our members ſhould periſh than that our whole body "ſhould be caſt into hell."

4. If we cannot totally ſubdue and eradicate our paſſions, yet we may divert them to proper objects, and exert them upon proper occaſions. Some paſſions may be ſo wrought and woven into the very frame of human nature, that like the image of Phidias in Minerva's ſhield, you cannot efface the one without effacing the other. But what perhaps you cannot utterly deſtroy, you may however correct and improve, avert from what is vicious, employ in what is virtuous, or at leaſt in what is innocent. If you cannot root out all the ſeeds of anger, yet you may (Eph. IV. 26.) "be angry and ſin not," only expreſs your anger and reſentment againſt what only deſerves it, wilful folly and wickedneſs. If you cannot quench all the ſparks of ambition, yet there is an honeſt and laudable, as well as a diſhoneſt and culpable, ambition; and you may chooſe whether you will endevor to riſe by what is virtuous and praiſe-worthy, or whether you will ſtick at nothing though ever ſo mean and little to make yourſelf great. Fear is a natural paſſion, but the fear of men may be improved into the fear of God. (Luke XII. 4, 5.) "Be not afraid of them that kill the "body, and after that have no more that they can do; but I will "forewarn you whom you ſhall fear, fear him who after he hath killed "hath power to caſt into hell." Love is a natural paſſion, but the love of the world and of the things of the world may be transformed into the love of God, and of virtue as it is the imitation, and of happineſs as it is the enjoyment of him. (1 John II. 15.) "Love not the "world, neither the things that are in the world; if any man love "the world, the love of the Father is not in him." And ſo in other inſtances, every paſſion is lawful, if it be lawfully employed: only in general,

general, as to the things of this world, our paſſions do not want the ſpur ſo much as the bridle.

5. It may be proper to balance paſſion with paſſion, and to ſet affection againſt affection, leſt any one ſhould gain the dominion over us. As they ſay poiſons are expelled by poiſons, ſo perhaps one paſſion is the beſt antidote for another. Hope and fear, love and hatred, joy and grief and the like may deſtroy the ill effects one of another, and each hinder each from growing exceſſive; as birds and beaſts of prey are beſt hunted down by thoſe of their own kind. It is a ſecret of government in the government of ſtates to play faction againſt faction, and to bridle one party with another, that neither may grow too powerful. Something like this is neceſſary in the government within; and ſo we may bring light out of chaos, and produce harmony from diſcord.

Laſtly we muſt make uſe of all other means, as of reading and meditation to eſtabliſh the empire of reaſon over paſſion—of the reports of our enemies to learn our faults, and of the advice of our friends to reform them—of firm reſolution againſt every thing that is criminal, be it ever ſo natural, ever ſo dear to us—and above all, of ſincere and earneſt prayer to God, that his "ſtrength" may "be made perfect in our weakneſs." (2 Cor. III. 5.) "For we are not ſufficient "of ourſelves to do" theſe things "as of ourſelves, but our ſufficiency "is of God."

And let not the difficulty of the thing diſcourage us, but rather quicken than ſlacken our endevors. In this reſpect art may get the better of nature, and habit may induce a ſecond nature more powerful than the firſt. The ſtory of Socrates is very well known, that he was naturally, as his face declared him, drunken and libidinous; and his face is obſerved from ancient buſts and ſeals to have reſembled that of the drunken god Silenus: But by philoſophy he ſubdued and even changed nature, became a "burning and ſhining light" in his generation, lived a confeſſor and died a martyr, and deſerved to be canonized much better than many of thoſe who ſtand as ſaints in the Roman calendar. St. Paul ſhowed a perſecuting ſpirit very early; for he

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was only a young man, when he was conſenting to the death of the firſt Chriſtian martyr St. Stephen: And as he grew up, this ſpirit grew up with him, and as long as he continued a Jew he was for extirpating all the Chriſtians. But when he became a Chriſtian, was he then alſo for extirpating all the Jews? No, Grace had now corrected nature; he who was all violence before was now all beneficence, and in extaſy of charity could even wiſh (Rom. IX. 3.) that "himſelf were "accurſed from Chriſt for his brethren, his kinſmen according to the "fleſh." Let us not then deſpair that what hath been done may by the grace of God be done again. However difficult the work may be, I am ſure it is no more difficult than neceſſary. For it will not be ſufficient to diſcharge our duty in all other reſpects, if we yet harbour any favorite vice, if we yet indulge any criminal paſſion, any unlawful inclination. That ſingle defect will cancel the merit of all the reſt, as even one flaw in a diamond will ſpoil its luſtre and beauty, and greatly leſſen its price and value. It is very true what St. James ſaith, (James II. 10, 11, 12.) "Whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and "yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." Not that a ſinner in one thing is a ſinner in every thing; not that God will puniſh the breach of one law as much as the breach of all his laws: But he who offends in one point offends againſt the authority that enacted the whole; the authority is the ſame in all, and therefore the ſame in all ſhould be our obedience. "For He that ſaid Do not commit adul-"tery ſaid alſo Do not kill; now if thou commit no adultery yet if "thou kill, thou art become a tranſgreſſor of the law." Therefore "ſo ſpeak ye and ſo do as they that ſhall be judged" accordingly. Oh! do not for the ſake of one vice forfeit your allegiance to God. Remember what our Saviour hath ſaid, (Matt. VI. 24.) "No man "can ſerve two maſters, for either he will hate the one and love the "other, or elſe he will hold to the one and deſpiſe the other;" ye cannot ſerve God and any luſt; "ye cannot ſerve God and Mammon."

DISSERTATION LIV.

The Romiſh Clergy Lords over God's Heritage.

ST. Peter drawing near to the concluſion of his firſt Epiſtle, in the beginning of the Vth chapter exhorts "the elders" or governors of the Church to a faithful diſcharge of their duty. Whether by "elders" be meant the biſhops in particular, or preſbyters in general, is not very material. "The elders which are among you I exhort who alſo "am an elder, and a witneſs of the ſufferings of Chriſt, and alſo a "partaker of the glory that ſhall be revealed, Feed the flock of God "which is among you;" He giveth the ſame command to them, which our Saviour had given to him of "feeding his ſheep," and which doubtleſs had made very deep impreſſion in his mind; "Feed "the flock of God which is among you, taking the overſight thereof, "not by conſtraint," not grudgingly and as a burden impoſed upon you, "but willingly," with your own cheerful conſent and the free-will offering of your ſervice; "not for filthy lucre," not to make an unjuſt gain of it, "but of a ready mind," out of generous principles and a deſire to do good; "Neither as being Lords over God's heri-"tage," neither as exerciſing dominion, or lording it over your lots and charges, "but being enſamples to the flock; And when the chief "ſhepherd ſhall appear, ye ſhall receive a crown of glory that fadeth "not away."

This is not the only memorable paſſage to this purpoſe in ſcripture. Our Saviour had again and again declared to his apoſtles, (Matt. XX. 25, &c.) "The princes of the Gentiles exerciſe dominion over them, "and they that are great exerciſe authority upon them; But it ſhall "not be ſo among you; but whoſoever will be great among you, let "him be your miniſter; and whoſoever will be chief among you,

"let

" let him be your ſervant; Even as the Son of man came not to be " miniſtred unto but to miniſter, and to give his life a ranſom for " many." St. Paul diſclaims all dominion, as an apoſtle, over the faith of the Corinthians, (2 Cor. I. 24.) " Not that we have domi- " nion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy;" and his inſtructions to Timothy and Titus concerning the epiſcopal charge are very particular, and deſerve to be graven in the memories of all, who are or may be called to that high office and dignity in the Church. " A " biſhop," ſaith he to Timothy, (1 Tim. III. 3.) " muſt be no " ſtriker, not greedy of filthy lucre, but patient, not a brawler not " covetous;" (2 Tim. II. 24, 25.) " And the ſervant of the Lord " muſt not ſtrive, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, " in meekneſs inſtructing thoſe that oppoſe themſelves." To Titus he ſaith, (Tit. I. 7, 8.) " A biſhop muſt be blameleſs, as the ſtew- " ard of God, not ſelf-willed, not ſoon angry, no ſtriker, not given " to filthy lucre, But a lover of hoſpitality, a lover of good men, " ſober, juſt, holy, temperate." St. James giveth a precept to the ſame purpoſe, which belongs to all Chriſtians in general, but to the biſhops and paſtors in particular. (James III. 13, 17.) " Who is a " wiſe man and indued with knowlege among you? let him ſhow " out of a good converſation his works with meekneſs of wiſdom; For " the wiſdom that is from above is firſt pure, then peaceable, gentle, " and eaſie to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without " partiality and without hypocriſy." The ſame ſpirit breaths throughout the whole New Teſtament, but we will cite only one paſſage more from our Saviour himſelf, (Matt. XXIV. 45, &c.) " Who then is a " faithful and wiſe ſervant whom his Lord hath made ruler over his " houſehold to give them meat in due ſeaſon? Bleſſed is that ſervant " whom his Lord when he cometh ſhall find ſo doing. But and if " that evil ſervant ſhall ſay in his heart, My Lord delayeth his com- " ing, and ſhall begin to ſmite his fellow-ſervants, the Lord of that " ſervant ſhall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and ap- " point him his portion with the hypocrits; there ſhall be weeping " and gnaſhing of teeth."

Now what need was there of all this caution? For what end or reaſon was this doctrin inculcated with ſuch vehemence and ſuch reiteration? We cannot ſuppoſe that the holy Spirit was afraid, where no fear was. Was it therefore likely that ſuch plain, pious, venerable men, as the primitive Fathers were, ſhould turn tyrants and "lord it "over God's heritage?" Nay rather, what was Church-preferment in thoſe days, but painful præeminence, and a more ready ſtep to martyrdom? Theſe admonitions therefore could not be ſo properly intended for thoſe apoſtolical times, as for ſucceeding generations, in which as the revenue of the Church increaſed, the piety of Churchmen might decreaſe; as they grew more eaſy and opulent, they might grow more haughty and ambitious; and Providence, wiſely foreſeeing the rocks upon which they would run, hung out theſe lights purpoſely to give warning that they might avoid them. We could wiſh indeed, if wiſhing were effectual, that the courſe of events had not ſo fully evinced the neceſſity of all this caution, and that theſe admonitions had been as carefully followed by men, as they were graciouſly intended by God. Some of all ſects and communions may be perhaps more or leſs to blame; but the ſpirit of tyranny and dominion is no where ſo viſible as in the Biſhops and Clergy of the Church of Rome. This indeed is the true ſpring and ſecret of that religion. From this principle it all ariſeth, and into this it may all be reſolved. They may boaſt of ſcripture and antiquity, of fathers and councils; but their boaſting is vain, and if we would examin the doctrins of Popery, as it ſtandeth diſtinguiſhed from our common Chriſtianity, we ſhould find them all contrived and calculated ſome way or other for the honor or power or profit of the Clergy. Some of their innovations and corruptions were plainly brought in with this view; they carry it in the very face of them; and others have the ſame tendency, though perhaps not ſo directly yet by induction and conſequence. Let us lay together ſome particular inſtances to confirm the truth of our general aſſertion. In ſo large a field we cannot pretend to bind all in ſheaves, but muſt neceſſarily leave ſomething for the gleaning of others.

Our

Our general aſſertion is this, that the Biſhops and Prieſts of the Church of Rome are "Lords over God's heritage," the doctrins of Popery, as it ſtandeth diſtinguiſhed from our common Chriſtianity, being all contrived and calculated ſome way or other for the honor or power or profit of the Clergy. And I ſay firſt ſome of their innovations and corruptions were plainly brought in with this view; they carry it in the very face of them. We may reckon under this head particularly the infallibility of the Church; the Pope's ſupremacy; the ſcriptures and ſervice of God in an unknown tongue; auricular confeſſion and abſolution; the exempting of the Clergy from temporal juriſdiction; and their means and inſtruments of perſecution, eſpecially the inquiſition.

They are by no means agreed where their *infallibility* is to be placed, whether in the Pope alone, or in a council alone, or in both together: But wherever it be placed, it is certainly a moſt high privilege and prerogative, making man almoſt equal with God. And what is the excellence of it, admit but this, and you muſt admit their whole religion. Let the ſerpent but get in his head, his body will eaſily follow.

The Pope's *ſupremacy* is a favorite point in the court of Rome, and well indeed it may be, for by it the Pope is not only conſtituted biſhop of biſhops and ſupreme judge in all cauſes eccleſiaſtical, but likewiſe king of kings and lord of lords, and upon occaſion can abſolve ſubjects from their allegiance, and depoſe princes from their thrones by the plenitude of his authority. Nor is this power only nominal, but hath frequently been exerted; and though the Pope be not now that Lord upon earth that he hath been, yet the acts of his ſupremacy make a principal part of the hiſtory of ſome former centuries. Imagin an (1) Emperor of Germany forced to wait three days, in the midſt of winter, bare-headed and bare-footed, in an outward court before he could obtain (2) the Pope's abſolution. Imagin another (3) Pope ſetting his foot upon the neck of another (4) Emperor, and cauſing at the ſame time that verſe to to be recited out of the

(1) Henry IVth. (2) Pope Hildebrand or Gregory VIIth. (3) Pope Alexander IIId. (4) Frederic Iſt.

Pſalms,

Pſalms, (XGI. 13.) "Thou ſhalt tread upon the lion and adder, the "young lion and the dragon ſhalt thou trample under feet." Imagin again another (5) Pope ſitting in his chair, and an (6) Emperor kneeling before him to receive his imperial crown from him, the Pope firſt putting the crown upon the Emperor's head, and then kicking it off with his foot, declaring at the ſame time that he had a power to make Emperors and to unmake them again at pleaſure. Imagin a (7) King of our own compelled ſhamefully to reſign his crown into the hands of the Pope's Legate. And theſe are not mere imaginations, but ſome few real inſtances out of many.

The *ſcriptures* and *ſervice* of *God* in an *unknown tongue* are plainly deſigned to keep the people in ignorance and blind obedience to the Clergy, and thereby to make way more effectually for their vain legends and traditions. They may pretend other reaſons, but thoſe are ſo palpably abſurd, that this only can be the true reaſon. Ignorance, they ſay, is the mother of devotion; and ſo, I believe, it is of devotion to them, but certainly not of devotion to God, whoſe worſhip is, or ought to be a "reaſonable ſervice."

Auricular confeſſion and *abſolution* are manifeſt contrivances for the Prieſts to inſinuate themſelves into the ſecrets of families, and thereby to gain an abſolute command and aſcendent over the purſes and conſciences of men.

Scire volunt ſecreta domus atque inde timeri.

Nay they have not only inſinuated themſelves by theſe means into the ſecrets of private families, but have alſo dived into the counſels and intrigues of courts; and many times the king's or queen's confeſſor is the hidden ſpring, that moveth the whole machine of ſtate. If a man have the reins and direction of your conſcience in his hands, he may ride you whereſoever and whenſoever he pleaſes.

The Clergy's *exempting* of themſelves from *temporal juriſdiction*, even in *temporal* cauſes, is a certain indication that they look upon themſelves, and are ambitious to be looked upon by others, as greater

(5) Pope Celeſtin. (6) Henry VIth. (7) King John.

than

than ſubjects. They are for having their perſons as ſacred as the ark was of old, and the profane Uzzah, who dareth to touch them, ſhould ſurely die. When even kings have attempted it, they have paid dearly for it; as to mention no more inſtances, may be ſeen particularly in the caſe of Henry the IId, one of the greateſt of our princes, who being deſirous to have a Clergyman, who had committed murder, brought to condign puniſhment, had ſuch a ſtorm raiſed againſt him by a bluſtring prelate, that he never enjoyed peace or quiet afterward, during the whole remainder of his reign.

Their means and inſtruments of *perſecution*, as bulls, interdicts, excommunications, and the like, are ſo many devices to confirm the Clergy in their authority and the people in their obedience. But of all their inſtruments of government the *inquiſition* is the moſt ſuttle as well as the moſt cruel; and (8) Sicilian tyrants in their malice never invented any thing like it. The Lord's Inquiſitors exerciſe ſuch powers as were never known to civil judges; and make nothing of torturing the bodies and confiſcating the eſtates of thoſe whom they pleaſe but to ſuſpect of hereſy. It is notorious that the Clergy are no where ſo abſolute as in the countries, where this office is erected; and we may venture to pronounce, that they cannot fail of ſitting firm in the ſaddle, as long as they keep this bridle in the jaws of the people.

Theſe things are plainly contrived and calculated for the honor and power and profit of the Clergy; they do not only pave the way to tyranny, but are tyranny itſelf: And 2dly others of their doctrins have the ſame tendency, though perhaps not ſo directly yet by induction and conſequence. We may reckon under this head particularly, tranſubſtantiation, communion in one kind, and private maſſes; purgatory and prayers for the dead; the merit of good works and indulgences; the celibacy of the Clergy and the different orders of their Religious; their five additional ſacraments; and the worſhip of ſaints, images, relics, and the like.

Tranſubſtantiation is ſuch a monſtrous abſurdity, that one would wonder why they ſhould pretend to impoſe it upon mankind; but

(8) —— Siculi non invenere tyranni
Majus tormentum—— Hor.

then

then if it be believed, it muſt needs beget a wondrous veneration of the Prieſt, who can work ſo ſuperlative a miracle, and of a wafer make a God. In like manner the cup is taken away from the people, and they are permitted to communicate only in *one* kind, for what reaſon, but that they may have the greater reſpect and reverence for the Prieſt, whoſe privilege it is to communicate in both? Thus it is that even abſurdities and ſacrilege are for the honor of the Roman Clergy. For the ſame reaſon the Prieſt celebrates *maſs alone*, and for another reaſon too, becauſe he is paid for it, nothing being more common than for ſo many maſſes to be ſaid for ſo much money.

The doctrin of *purgatory* is one of the moſt beneficial articles in the Church of Rome. For from the doctrin of purgatory naturally follows the expedience of prayers and maſſes for the dead, and from the expedience of prayers and maſſes for the dead follows as naturally the neceſſity of donations to Prieſts to ſay theſe prayers and maſſes. And ſuch is the ſuperſtition of mankind, the fear of dying and the fear for the dead, that the ſums, which by theſe means accrue to the Church are prodigious and almoſt incredible. I think we may be confident, that the foundation would not have been laid, but for the ſake of raiſing this ſuperſtructure upon it.

Near akin to their doctrin of purgatory, and almoſt as beneficial, is their doctrin of the *merit* of *good works* and *indulgences*. Of good works they take care to recommend liberality to the Clergy and indowments to Churches and Monaſteries as the principal. A man may alſo have ſuch a ſuperfluity of goodneſs, that he may perform even more than his duty, and merit ſalvation not only for himſelf but alſo for others. And the merits of Chriſtians together with the merits of Chriſt are laid up in the common bank or treaſury of the Church, of which the Pope keepeth the key, and out of which he may diſpenſe *pardons* and *indulgences* to what perſons and for what number of years he pleaſes. Here therefore another market is opened; for theſe indulgences, which it ſeemeth are to redeem their ſouls from purgatory, are always granted to people, in proportion to the money they give or the ſervices they have done to the Church. Matters may perhaps be managed

managed more dextrouſly and warily now; but we know very well that formerly the ſale of indulgences was ſo public and ſcandalous, that this ſingle circumſtance gave the firſt riſe to the Reformation.

The pretence for the *celibacy* of the *Clergy* is that they may live more abſtracted from the world, and attend more to their duty; but the true reaſon is that they may have no diſtinct and ſeperate intereſt of wife or family, but whether they live they may live unto the Church, or whether they die they may die unto the Church, dedicate all their ſervices to it while they live, and bequeath all their ſubſtance to it when they die. As the Clergy in general may be called the Pope's ſtanding army, ſo the religious orders may be reckoned as his life-guards. Different inſtitutions of holineſs may be their plea, but the grandeur of the Church is all their aim. For this they are trained up and diſciplined, ſome to preach and ſome even to beg, ſome for inquiſitors and ſome for writers and inſtructors of youth. Like planets they may move in various orbits and at different diſtances, but they are all attracted by the ſame ſun, and have all one common center.

There are *five ſacraments* added to the *two* which were inſtituted by Chriſt, and wherefore were they added? Why was Confirmation made a ſacrament, but to give the greater ſolemnity and ſacredneſs to that action of the Biſhop, and thereby to impreſs the deeper veneration of his epiſcopal dignity? Why was Penance made a ſacrament, but to raiſe the value and authority of that inſtitution, and thereby to give the Prieſt a more abſolute power over the pockets and conſciences of his penitents? Why was Ordination made a ſacrament, but that the people might entertain the higher notion of the ſacred and indelible character of the Clergy? Why was Marriage made a ſacrament, but that the Clergy might aſſume all matrimonial cauſes, all diſpenſations and divorces, into their own juriſdiction? Laſtly why was extreme Unction made a ſacrament, but that the Prieſts might have fitter opportunities of working upon people in their laſt moments to leave legacies to pious uſes,—by *pious uſes* meaning principally their own? And their doctrin of all the Sacraments, that the efficacy of them depends upon the good

intention of the prieſt, what is it but to make the people rely upon the prieſt for their ſalvation, as much as upon God himſelf?

Can any thing be more ridiculous in itſelf, or more contrary to ſcripture, than the *worſhip* of *ſaints*, *images*, *relics*, and the like? But the more ſaints there are, the more churches there are, and the more feſtivals there are, and the greater number of prieſts are employed and maintained. The power of canonization which the Pope aſſumes to himſelf, is alſo a mighty encouragement to future ſervices by rewarding ſo eminently the paſt. Beſides what rich preſents, what coſtly offerings are made to the ſhrines and images of the ſaints? In the Chapel of Loretto particularly (as Mr. Addiſon (9) relates) "ſilver can "ſcarce find admiſſion, and gold itſelf looks but poorly among ſuch "an incredible number of precious ſtones." And what are all theſe riches and treaſures, but ſo many repoſitories and magazines of the Church to be made uſe of upon any preſſing occaſion? So certain it is, that they lay up for themſelves "treaſures upon earth," whether they do or not "in heaven." Moreover of what admirable advantage are ſome old bones, or old pieces of wood exhibited for ſacred *relics*? It is tranſport enough to be permitted to kiſs and adore them, but happy is the perſon who receives a preſent of one of them, and ſuperabundantly rewarded for the moſt meritorious of ſervices.

The farther we trace this religion, the more we ſhall be confirmed in thinking it the completeſt ſyſtem of prieſtcraft and ſpiritual tyranny in the world. And the effects are anſwerable to their cauſes. For look into the eccleſiaſtical territories; and where was once the ſeat of riches and empire, there is now the moſt wretched ſcene of poverty and ſlavery, heaps of ruins where once were the moſt populous towns, bogs and moraſſes where once were the moſt fruitful fields, the garden of Europe. The Clergy, like Gideon's fleece, are watered and enriched with the dew of heaven, while all are dry and ſtarving round about them. But God be thanked, brethren, (Eph. IV. 20, 21.) "ye "have not ſo learned Chriſt, if ſo be that ye have heard and have "been taught as the truth is in Jeſus." We the Clergy of the Church

(9) Addiſon's travels.

of

of England neither aſſume nor deſire to aſſume any ſuch power and authority over the purſes and conſciences of men. We pretend to no infallibility; the utmoſt that we aſpire to is to be faithful interpreters of the infallible word of God. We affect no ſupremacy or independency, but acknowlege the ſame ſupreme head in all cauſes eccleſiaſtical and civil. We are ſo far from taking away the key of knowlege, and locking up the ſcriptures in an unknown tongue, that we are deſirous to have them read and underſtood by all the people, and would have our religion no farther approved than it is agreeable to the word of God. We are for toleration and no inquiſition, glad indeed of unity of opinion, where it can be obtained, but where it cannot, ſtill for preſerving unity of charity. In ſhort we do not (Matt. XV. 9.) "teach "for doctrins the commandments of men;" we do not (Mark VII. 13.) "make the word of God of none effect by our tradition;" we do not (2 Pet. II. 3. I. 16.) through covetouſneſs with feigned words, "with cunningly deviſed fables, make merchandiſe of you;" "but "(2 Cor. IV. 2, 5.) have renounced the hidden things of diſhoneſty, "not walking in craftineſs, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, "but by manifeſtation of the truth commending ourſelves to every "man's conſcience in the ſight of God. For we preach not ourſelves, "but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, and ourſelves your ſervants for Jeſus "ſake." If any man act otherwiſe (1 Cor. XI. 16.) and "ſeem to "be contentious, we have no ſuch cuſtom, neither the Churches of "God:" It is an evil ſpirit of his own, and not the ſpirit of the Church of England. England was once indeed the paradiſe of prieſts; here they ſwarmed and fixed like locuſts: But the Reformation hath freed us from that yoke which our fathers were not able to bear; and if we could again ſubmit our necks to it, we ſhould deſerve as little pity as the Iſraelites, who while they were fed with "the bread of "heaven" yet longed to return to the "leeks and the onions and "the garlick in Egypt." We Britons generally pretend to be jealous and tender of our civil liberties; let us at leaſt be as jealous and tender of our ſpiritual, now eſpecially when the agents and emiſſaries of the Church of Rome are ſo buſy and ſucceſsful in making converts.[1]

Slavery of any kind is bad, and ſurely that of the body is not worſe than that of the mind and conſcience, but both together muſt be intolerable. If there were none other arguments againſt Popery, yet this is argument ſufficient, that we ſhould not be ſlaves. (2 Cor. III. 17.) " Where the ſpirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." (John VIII. 32.) " If ye know the truth, the truth ſhall make you free." (Gal. V. 1.) " Stand faſt therefore in the liberty, wherewith Chriſt," and under him our reformers, " have made us free, and be not intangled " again with the yoke of bondage."

DISSERTATION LV.

On the Ceſſation of Miracles.

ONE would think there was no need to go about to perſuade mankind, that miracles have long ſince ceaſed in the Chriſtian Church. The hiſtories of paſt, and experience and obſervation of preſent timés ſufficiently evince it. But there is a Church, that as in other matters ſo particularly in this, would compel us to believe againſt our ſenſes; and maketh the power of miracles to be one of the ſtanding marks and characteriſtics of the true Church. The legends of her ſaints outdo the ſcriptures themſelves for wonders; and thoſe are recommended to the people in a known tongue, while theſe are locked up in an unknown. But ſurely theſe lying wonders are no proof that divine miracles are not ceaſed: and a man muſt have a blind I will not ſay faith but credulity to believe ſuch monkiſh inventions to be the works of God. For not to take notice, that the wiſeſt and moſt prudent of the Romaniſts themſelves are of opinion, that theſe miracles are nothing but *pious frauds*, and were deviſed only to raiſe and

cheriſh the devotion of the vulgar, partly to allure, and partly to frighten men into the pale of the Church—not to take notice, that they abound moſt, where is leaſt occaſion for them; for in the times of darkneſs and ignorance before the reformation they were much more numerous than ſince; and now where popery beareth the greateſt ſway and the iron rod of the inquiſition keepeth people catholic and orthodox, there theſe impoſtures are ſhown frequently and familiarly, but ſeldom or never in the preſence of heretics and for the conviction of infidels—not to take notice, that in ſeveral inſtances they contradict one another, and ſaint is alleged againſt ſaint, miracle againſt miracle, revelation againſt revelation, when one of them muſt be falſe, and probably neither of them is true—not to take notice that ſeveral of them have been convicted of forgery and impoſture, and all of them are ſuch romantic extravagant things, that barely to mention is to expoſe them; the very recital of ſuch abſurdities is a ſufficient confutation of them—not to take notice of theſe particulars, I deſire only to know, whether the doctrins pretended to be confirmed by them are the ſame with thoſe contained in the goſpel or different? If the ſame, then there is no need of miracles to give them credit and authority; they are ſufficiently atteſted already: If different, then they are not capable of being confirmed by any miracles whatever, and (Gal. I. 8.) an apoſtle, an angel from heaven delivering any other goſpel than that we have received is accurſed. And indeed moſt of the Romiſh miracles are brought to confirm purgatory, the ſacrifice of the maſs, the worſhip of images, and the like, doctrins directly contrary to the words of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus and his Apoſtles; and therefore they muſt be the deluſions of Satan, and cannot poſſibly be wrought by the Spirit of God; for God can never be ſuppoſed to ſet his hand to contradictions, and it is the peculiar mark and brand of Antichriſt, (2 Theſſ. II. 9, 10.) that "his coming is after the working of Satan with all power, and ſigns and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableneſs of unrighteouſneſs."

As to the preciſe time of the ceſſation of miracles, it is a point impoſſible perhaps to be clearly determined, is certainly of too curious a nature

nature to be ſettled incidentally, and very well deſerves to be handled in a diſcourſe by itſelf. The general opinion of proteſtant divines hath been, that after the times of the apoſtles, they were adapted to the exigencies of the Church, and were more or leſs frequent as there was more or leſs occaſion for them; till at laſt Chriſtianity being fully eſtabliſhed and ſupported by the civil power, they were wholly withdrawn. Dr. Middleton and thoſe who concur with him are not for extending them ſo far, but curtail and limit them to the days of the apoſtles. Others, as Dr. Chapman and Berriman, are for extending them farther, and vindicate as well ſeveral miracles of the fourth and fifth centuries. All parties however agree, that the truth of the Chriſtian religion is ſufficiently atteſted and confirmed by the miracles of our Saviour and his apoſtles and firſt diſciples; ſo that whether theſe later miracles were real or not, they make little or no material difference; the foundation of Chriſt ſtill ſtandeth firm and ſure, as well without them as with them. An inquiry therefore into theſe later miracles is rather more a matter of curioſity and learning, than of any eſſential uſe and ſervice; though when contraries are affirmed by men of abilities and learning, one is willing to know on which ſide the truth lieth, who are in the right, and who in the wrong. Now the beſt way of judging and deciding the differenee between them is by an induction of particulars, beginning with the apoſtolical fathers, as they are called, and ſo proceeding downwards, tracing the courſe of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, ſtating the facts in the order they are related or alluded to, and ſeeing what weight and ſtreſs they will bear to be laid upon them. By ſuch a review it will appear evidently, that too much hath been aſſerted on one ſide, and perhaps too much denied on the other. It ſhould ſeem that after the days of the apoſtles the power of working miracles was in great meaſure withdrawn. It was not committed to any man or ſet of men in the ſame manner as to the apoſtles and firſt Chriſtians. It was not exerted ſo generally, but only on particular occaſions. The miracles which were wrought, were wrought not ſo much for the conviction and converſion of Heathens, as for the ſupport comfort and encouragement of Chriſtians: and indeed without

out divine viſions and revelations, without extraordinary gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, it ſeemeth impoſſible for them to have ſhown that wonderful fortitude and magnanimity in the midſt of tortures, and to have triumphed by their very ſufferings. When ſome of the fathers make mention of perſons raiſed from the dead, and living afterwards many years among them, it is hard to believe that this was nothing but an untruth, which their Chriſtian brethren muſt have known to be an untruth, and the Heathens might eaſily have proved to be ſo. When others in their apologies for their religion appeal to their miracles, and challenge the Roman magiſtrates to ſee them with their own eyes, it is hard to believe that this was nothing more than the vain confidence of boaſting, or that they would call upon their enemies to be ſpectators of their folly and madneſs. Many more miracles indeed are pretended, than were ever really exhibited. Many more are reported upon hearſay evidence, than atteſted by credible eye-witneſſes. Many more are trifling and frivolous, than ſubſervient to any great or good end and purpoſe. In very few inſtances can that be ſaid which was aſſerted by one of the apoſtles, (1 John I. 1, 3.) "That which we have heard, which we have ſeen with our eyes, "which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, that de-"clare we unto you." Several of the fathers were honeſt and well meaning men, but withal ſomewhat weak and credulous, eaſy to entertain and fond to report ſtories, which they thought made for the honor and advancement of their religion. It is happy for us, (Matt. XXIII. 9.) that we are to "call no man father upon earth." Our faith is entirely to be "built (Eph. II. 20.) upon the foundation of "apoſtles and prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner-"ſtone." The only infallible hiſtory is the Bible.

Since then miracles are ceaſed in the Chriſtian Church, it will be proper to inquire into the reaſons of their ceſſation; that ſo we may be ſatisfied of the wiſdom of the divine proceedings, as well in withholding them from theſe laſt ages, as in affording them to the firſt. Now there are very juſt and ſufficient reaſons for the ceſſation of miracles; becauſe if they were continued, there would not only be no uſe

uſe in them, but over and above ſeveral inconveniences attending them; I mean, in Chriſtian countries, for in countries yet unconverted and which have not heard of the name of Jeſus the caſe is different, and what God may do or not do for their conviction it is impoſſible for us to determin.

If miracles were continued there would be no uſe in them, and that I ſay is a ſufficient reaſon for the ceſſation of them. For ſurely it is beneath the majeſty of God to do ſuch things as are of no uſe, and ſubſervient to no wiſe end and purpoſe. And that miracles would be of no uſe, no ſervice to the Church in theſe later ages may eaſily be made appear by various arguments and reflections.

If miracles were continued they would be of no uſe, becauſe the end for which they were given is already attained: and common prudence will tell us, that when an end is attained, the means to that end are of no farther uſe and ſervice. The reaſon and end of miracles was to confirm and authorize the Chriſtian religion, but now the Chriſtian religion is ſufficiently authorized and eſtabliſhed, there is no more occaſion for them. When the building is raiſed, there is no need the ſcaffolds ſhould ſtand which helped to raiſe it. It was impoſſible to plant the Chriſtian religion in the world without miracles, conſidering the natural abilities of the firſt preachers of Chriſtianity were ſo ſmall and ſo great the power and authority of its enemies and perſecutors: but now it is not only planted, but hath taken deep root and floriſhed, now moſt of the reaſon and learning in the world is engaged on its ſide, now many of the kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of the Lord and his Chriſt, what can miracles do but what is already done, what but light a candle to the ſun, what but add a drop of water to the ocean? Reaſon and revelation will both teach us, that miracles are for ſigns, (1 Cor. XIV. 22) "not to them "who believe, but to them who believe not."

Again. If they were continued they would be of no uſe, becauſe their force and influence would be loſt by the frequency of them. If they were indulged to one, another would reckon himſelf equally intitled to them; and if indulged to many, they would in a manner become

become no miracles at all. For the definition of miracles conſiſts in this, that they are above the ordinary courſe of nature; but if they were repeated at every turn and upon every occaſion, all diſtinctions of natural and ſupernatural would vaniſh, and we ſhould be at a loſs to ſay, which were the ordinary works of Providence, which the extraordinary. If it was as uſual for men to riſe again, as it is for them to die, we ſhould be no more affected with the one than the other. If the ſun ſtood ſtill every day, as it did one day at the command of Joſhua, we ſhould be no more ſurpriſed than we are at its daily running its courſe. It is the novelty alone that amazes us, and we ſhall find it with them as with other things, the more frequent the leſs affecting. If they were made cheap and familiar, inſtead of raiſing our wonder and aſtoniſhment, they would put us upon inventing theories and framing hypotheſes in order to ſolve their appearances according to the laws of matter and motion. There never was but one creation and one deluge, and yet the wit of man hath aſpired to account for theſe upon mechanical principles; how much more for thoſe miracles which ſhould occur ſo often, that they might be taken for natural effects? They might have ſome influence perhaps upon our philoſophy, but would have none at all, or at leaſt no good one, upon our religion.

Beſides it is probable that if they were continued they would be of no uſe, becauſe thoſe perſons who refuſe to be convinced by the old, would not be convinced by any new ones. For it is not for want of evidence but for want of ſincerity and out of paſſion and prejudice, that any man rejects the miracles recorded in holy writ: and the ſame want of ſincerity, the ſame paſſions and prejudices would make him ſtand out againſt any proof, any miracle whatever. As the commiſſion of one ſin, ſo likewiſe one degree of unbelief, hardens and diſpoſes a man for another and greater: and he who hath brought himſelf to that paſs, that he can deny what he heareth upon the moſt credible teſtimony in the world, is in a fair way to deny what he himſelf ſeeth, eſpecially if he hath an equal intereſt and equal inclination to believe neither. Moſt of the ſame objections which he raiſeth againſt paſt,

he might raiſe againſt preſent miracles; and if nothing elſe yet their commonneſs itſelf would bring them under ſuſpicion. And ſuppoſing (which is the beſt that can be ſuppoſed) a ſign or a wonder to make ſome impreſſion upon ſuch a man, yet how long would that impreſſion laſt? till it had worked him up to a thorough change and reformation? Alas! no: it would be but as ſomething written in the ſand, which the next tide of paſſion would waſh away, the next gale of luſt deface. For theſe reaſons I apprehend, that he who is profane would be profane ſtill, and he who is filthy would be filthy ſtill, notwithſtanding any miracles wrought for his conviction: and if it could not be made appear by probable reaſons, yet it is confirmed by experience and matter of fact. For ſacred hiſtory will inſtruct us, that miracles are quite loſt upon the obſtinate and irreligious, and nothing is ſufficient to convince thoſe who are reſolved not to be convinced. How was the heart of Pharaoh hardened under all the ſigns and wonders wrought by the hand of Moſes? How greedily did Balaam run after the wages of unrighteouſneſs, though an angel withſtood his paſſage? How diſobedient and refractory were the children of Iſrael in the wilderneſs, though fed and ſupported by continual miracles, though the heavens rained fleſh upon them for their meat, and the rocks melted into ſtreams for their drink, though they were led by a cloud to ſcreen them from their enemies in the day, and by a pillar of fire to comfort and inlighten them in the night? Never man did ſo many miracles as did the bleſſed Jeſus, and yet how often did the Jews on that very account conſpire againſt his life, and call him *Samaritan*, *Madman*, *Devil* and what not? Such were the effects formerly upon hardened ſinners, and why ſhould we think the caſe would be otherwiſe now? In a word there is no need of any new miracles, for reaſonable men may eaſily be convinced without them, and the obſtinate and unreaſonable will not even with them be convinced. So true is that remark, (Luke XVI. 31.) "If they hear not Moſes and the Pro-
"phets nor Chriſt and his Apoſtles, neither will they be perſuaded
"though one roſe from the dead."

Hitherto

Hitherto we have been endevoring to ſhow, that no benefit and advantage would accrue to the Church from continued miracles, but now we ſhall advance one ſtep farther, and endevor to prove, not only that they would be no ways uſeful, but many ways prejudicial, and attended with ſundry inconveniences. And if their uſeleſneſs alone is a powerful argument for their ceſſation, the manifeſt inconvenience of them will be ſtill of more force to infer the ſame concluſion.

For if they were continued, the commiſſion and power of working them muſt be intruſted with ſome hands or other: and ſuch a commiſſion is a high privilege and prerogative, raiſing a man above the common pitch and level of mankind: and how few have heads ſtrong enough to ſtand on ſuch an eminence without turning giddy at the proſpect beneath them? how few can poſſeſs ſuch extraordinary talents without ambition or vain glory? without emulating thoſe who have the like qualifications, and thinking meanly of thoſe who have not? This very thing was the occaſion of great diſorders in the Church of Corinth, as we may learn from the XIIth, XIIIth, and XIVth Chapters of St. Paul's 1ſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians. They contended earneſtly, it ſeems, about ſpiritual gifts, whoſe were the beſt and which ſhould have the precedency: and if diviſions crept into the Church ſo early upon this ſcore, what effects would they have produced by this time? How would the members of the ſame Church, how would the members of different Churches have vied one with another, in ſigns and wonders? Spiritual pride would quite have overborn Chriſtian charity; and indeed it is a ſignal inſtance of humility (and what our Saviour thought worthy of particular injunction) for a man (Luke X. 20.) to " rejoice not that the ſpirits are ſubject unto him, but ra-
" ther to rejoice becauſe his name is written in heaven."

And then again. What advantage would enthuſiaſts and cunning impoſtors make of miracles? How artfully would they apply them to their purpoſes where they were, and counterfeit them where they were not? If none are admitted, then we can be deceived by none; but where men live in expectation of true miracles, there they are more likely to be miſled by falſe. Ill men might

ſometimes obtain the power into their hands, and then without doubt they would proſtitute it to ill deſigns. Nor let it ſeem ſtrange that I ſuppoſe ill men poſſeſſed of ſuch a power, ſince our bleſſed Saviour himſelf hath informed us, (Matt. VII. 22, 23.) that in the day of judgment, many will ſay unto him, "Lord, Lord have we not propheſied "in thy name? and in thy name have caſt out devils? and in thy "name done many wonderful works?" and yet for all this "will he "profeſs unto them, I never knew you; depart from me ye that "work iniquity."

To this I might add, that they would occaſion many hypocrits: for as the people followed our Saviour becauſe they (John VI. 26.) "did eat of the loaves and were filled," ſo many would be of the Church only for the ſake of the miracles, that they might receive the benefit of them—I might add alſo that upon this hypotheſis, our faith would not be ſo free and voluntary and conſequently not intitled to ſo glorious a reward; for as our Lord himſelf ſpeaketh, (John XX. 29.) "Thomas becauſe thou haſt ſeen, thou haſt believed; bleſſed are "they who have not ſeen and yet have believed"—I might farther add, that it would greatly derogate from the miracles of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, for what would there be ſo particular and extraordinary in them, if many a man had done the ſame ſince?—But it will be ſufficient to obſerve, that this ſcheme would be neither worthy of God, nor ſuited to the other methods of his providence, nor in the iſſue conducive to his honor and glory. For would it become him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, to make the fancy and humor of his creatures his rule of acting, and to gratify unreaſonable men with miracles as often as their vanity, caprice and infidelity ſhould be pleaſed to demand them? Not ſo doth he proceed in the other parts of his government, in the other diſpenſations of his providence. He made the world at firſt by miracle, but he now governs it by ſtanding laws, and the mediation of ſecond cauſes; and I never yet heard, that any miracle was ever wrought for the conviction of an atheiſt. As long as there were prophets in the Jewiſh Church, ſo long were there miracles; but when the ſpirit of prophecy was withdrawn,

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and the canon of the Old Teſtament was completed, then miraculous gifts were withdrawn too, and the appeal was made to the written word, " to the law and to the teſtimony." And why in this latter inſtance ſhould the correſpondence, analogy, and harmony of the divine proceedings be broken and diſturbed? The Chriſtian religion appears more excellent, more wonderful, more worthy of its divine author in having its proofs ſo contrived and ordered as to be ſtanding proofs and equally ſatisfactory and convincing from the beginning of the Chriſtian æra to the end, than it would or could do in being from time to time confirmed by ſtill more and more miracles: as we more juſtly admire and commend that fabric which is built for ages, than one which ſtandeth continually in need of new props and buttreſſes to ſupport it. At this diſtance of time the proofs of the Chriſtian religion are amply ſufficient to ſatisfy any reaſonable mind of its truth and divinity: for though we are deprived of that ocular demonſtration and full diſplay of miracles which they enjoyed in the firſt ages, yet in theſe later ages we have this advantage added to the credibility of miracles, that we ſee the prophecies more and more fulfilled. The continuance of miracles would be ſo far from promoting the glory of God, that hardly any thing can be deviſed more deſtructive of it. For it would be reverſing and reſcending all the ſettled laws and conſtitutions of providence, and in a manner introducing the old chaos and confuſion in the room of that beauty, proportion and order, which is now viſible in every part of nature, and leadeth us to the knowlege of the God of nature, (Rom. I. 20.) " the inviſible things of him being " clearly ſeen in the things which are made." Frequent miracles would be thought to proceed more from ſome defect in nature, than from the particular interpoſition of God. Men would grow atheiſts by the means of them rather than Chriſtians. Seeing nothing orderly, nothing regular in the courſe of nature, they would be forward to conclude that there was no God who made the world, or none who ſuperintends and directs the affairs of it.

We ſee, there is no reaſon to make it matter of ſcoffing with the ſcoffers in St. Peter (2 Pet. III. 4.) that " all things continue as they

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"were from the beginning of the creation:" there is no reaſon to complain, that God is wanting to his Church. He hath done all that is neceſſary, and more than is neceſſary all that is proper and becoming; and we cannot make any change in his ſcheme without changing conſiderably for the worſe. God doeth every thing for the beſt. As long as miracles were of ſervice, ſo long were they indulged to the Church: but the uſe and end of them ceaſing, they ceaſed too; and it would have been in many reſpects prejudicial to mankind to have continued them longer. They were granted for good reaſons, and for good reaſons were they withdrawn; and God is to be glorified in the one as well as in the other. The giving and withholding are both expedient, are both providential in their ſeaſons; and in this ſenſe we may ſay with holy Job (I. 21.) "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath "taken away; Bleſſed be the name of the Lord."

DISSERTATION LVI.

On the Difficulties of Scripture.

WHAT St. Peter ſays of St. Paul's Epiſtles is no leſs true of other parts of ſcripture, (2 Pet. III. 16.) that there are in them "ſome things hard to be underſtood." If ſuch was the caſe even in the apoſtles days, theſe difficulties may well be multiplied and increaſed now at this diſtance of time. The diverſity of churches, the variety of ſects and opinions, the contrariety of tranſlations paraphraſes and annotations on the bible, are ſo many demonſtrations of the truth of what is here aſſerted. But there is not ſo much occaſion to prove that ſome parts of ſcripture are obſcure, as to render the reaſons why they are obſcure. Why is that which was intended for general uſe, ſo difficult

difficult and hard to be underſtood? why is that which was deſigned to promote glory to God and good-will among men, made the cauſe of ſo much diſcord and diſſenſion? It is certain, nothing is of greater concernment to mankind, than a right underſtanding of ſcripture; and what is of concernment to all, why was it not to all made obvious and eaſy? Might not God almoſt as well not have delivered his will at all, as have delivered it thus darkly and obſcurely?

Now in anſwer to theſe inquiries I deſire it may principally be conſidered, that the ſcriptures are plain and eaſy to be underſtood in all things neceſſary to ſalvation: And of this we may be as certain, as we are that God is a being wiſe, and juſt, and good, and merciful, and a lover of mankind. To ſay that God requires men to believe any thing, to practiſe any thing under pain of damnation, and yet that he has not ſufficiently explained and publiſhed it, is to make God no better than an Egyptian taſk-maſter and tyrant, demanding brick without ſtraw, reaping where he has not ſown, and gathering where he has not ſtrowed. If the ſcriptures are not plain and intelligible in at leaſt all that is eſſential to faith and manners, how can the prophet Iſaiah ſay of the goſpel, (XXXV. 8.) "It is an highway; the way-"faring men, though fools, ſhall not err therein?" how can St. Paul ſay, (2 Tim. III. 15.) "The ſcriptures are able to make a man wiſe "unto ſalvation?" how can he ſay again, (ver. 16, 17.) "All ſcrip-"ture is given by inſpiration of God, and is profitable for doctrin, "for reproof, for correction, for inſtruction in righteouſneſs, that the "man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furniſhed unto all good "works?" how can he ſay again, (2 Cor. IV. 3.) "If our goſpel be "hid, it is hid to them that are loſt?" how can St. John ſay, (John XX. 31.) "Theſe things are written that ye might believe that Jeſus "is the Chriſt the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life "through his name?" or how can St. Luke ſay, (Acts I. 1.) that his Goſpel is a treatiſe of "all that Jeſus began both to do and to teach," and that he wrote it for Theophilus that he might "know the cer-"tainty of thoſe things wherein he had been inſtructed?" Can we believe that the Son of God came into the world to ſave mankind, and

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yet that he hath not made plain the way to ſalvation; or are none to be ſaved but the critics and caſuiſts, the ſcribes and diſputers of this world? For what end were the ſcriptures written, if not to be the rule of faith and manners; but how can they be the rule of faith and manners, if they are defective or obſcure in eſſentials, that is, no rule at all? Let any man ſhow us any thing in ſcripture that is neceſſary to ſalvation and yet unintelligible; ſure we are the ſcripture is intelligible enough in many things which are profitable but not neceſſary: and it would be ſtrange, that God ſhould make known many things which are only profitable, and at the ſame time conceal any thing that is eſſential and neceſſary to ſalvation.

We ſee the ſcriptures are plain and eaſy in eſſentials, and as for difficulties in other points, a rational account may be given of them.

I. There are *intrinſecal* difficulties in the ſcripture, ſuch as ariſe from the ſcripture itſelf.

For ſuch is the nature of ſeveral doctrins that they cannot poſſibly be ſo expreſſed as to give us a clear and perfect comprehenſion of them; and that not ſo much for any inexplicable difficulties in the things themſelves as for want of a proportionate capacity in us. As well may the blind man judge of colors, or the deaf man of ſounds, as we be able, in our preſent imperfect ſtate, to gain diſtinct and adequate ideas of what is ſpiritual and to be ſpiritually diſcerned.

The ſcripture too delivers many things in parables and parabolical forms of ſpeaking, and theſe muſt neceſſarily be attended with ſome obſcurity. And why parables are ſo frequently uſed in ſcripture we may find a particular reaſon (beſides the general one of the cuſtom of the country) in thoſe words of our Saviour: (Matt. XIII. 13, 14, 15.) "Therefore ſpeak I to them in parables, becauſe they ſeeing ſee not, "and hearing they hear not, neither do they underſtand: And in "them is fulfilled the prophecy of Eſaias which ſaith, By hearing "ye ſhall hear and ſhall not underſtand, and ſeeing ye ſhall ſee and "ſhall not perceive: For this peoples heart is waxed groſs, and their "ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have cloſed, leſt at "any time they ſhould ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, "and

" and ſhould underſtand with their hearts, and ſhould be converted, " and I ſhould heal them."

Then there are difficulties peculiar to the prophetic writings. Prophecies are not wont to be delivered clearly and diſtinctly at firſt. The expreſſions are for the moſt part poetical, and we cannot always eaſily diſcern the tranſitions from one ſubject to another. The prophecies of the ſame prophet were written and uttered at various times, and the collectors and compilers of them have not always ranged them in the exact order of time wherein they were written, which would have been a great help to the right underſtanding of them. The prophets often uſed to act a part of the prophecy, ſo that it was as neceſſary almoſt to ſee them as to hear them. Many other cauſes there are of obſcurity in the writings of the prophets, and no doubt probable reaſons may be aſſigned for them all. Many of the prophecies did not ſo nearly concern the times in which they were written, as the times which were to follow; and therefore they are ſo framed as that the event alone ſhall reflect light upon them, and we cannot throughly underſtand them till we ſee them fulfilled. If the prophecies had been delivered without a veil, without a figure, many of them would have gone nigh to have been loſt or deſtroyed, and others would not have been fulfilled at all, or not fulfilled in that natural eaſy manner in which we have ſeen them fulfilled. The Jews, I fear, would not have been fond of preſerving thoſe prophecies, which treat of the humiliation and ſufferings of the Meſſiah: and had things been foretold in all their circumſtances, it would have deterred men too much, or too much have encouraged them to fulfil them, and mens actings would not have been ſo free, nor God's providence ſo conſpicuous, as they have been in their completion.

Difficulties there are likewiſe peculiar to the epiſtles. Letters can ſeldom be fully underſtood but by thoſe who write them, or thoſe to whom they are written. And the reaſon hereof is evident, becauſe other people perhaps know little of the grounds and occaſion of the correſpondence, little of the parties concerned, their diſpoſition, their circumſtances, and what has been tranſacted between them. In let-

ters many things are only hinted at, which to particularize and deſcribe at large would be tedious or perhaps offenſive: many things are ſaid in anſwer to letters ſent and queſtions propoſed, which things may be open and eaſy enough to the perſons to whom the letters are addreſſed, but will want explanation to ſtrangers. Theſe difficulties are to be found not only in the epiſtles of the New Teſtament, but are common to them with all other epiſtolary writings. And beſides what are common to them all, each writer hath difficulties peculiarly his own. St. Paul in particular was a man of a warm temper and great vivacity of thought; he always abounds with metaphors, and is as full of things as words; he raiſes objections and offers anſwers without giving notice of any change in his figure of ſpeech; as he is treating of one ſubject, a word dropt from his pen will give him occaſion to make excurſions into another, and this filleth his epiſtles with long parentheſes, nay ſometimes he hath parentheſes within other parentheſes, which ſeem perplexed and difficult to thoſe who read him with little attention. He is a very cloſe writer, and requires a very cloſe reader. A looſe rambling head can never underſtand him, and much leſs have a ſenſe of his beauties; for beauties there are in him, as many as in any writer in the world, if profound learning, a fine thred of reaſoning, cloſeneſs of ſtile, pertinence of all he ſaith to his main deſign, the moſt exquiſit addreſs, and the moſt ſkilful and moving inſinuations may be called beauties.

The very ſtile and language of ſcripture is another occaſion of its difficulty and obſcurity to us at preſent. The people of the eaſt delight much in a bold figurative way of ſpeaking, which appears uncouth and extravagant to the cold temper and more correct genius of the weſt. The New Teſtament is written, as I may ſay, in a language by itſelf; it hath in it the looſeneſs and variety of the Greek, and the phraſes and idioms of the Hebrew or Syriac. The ſtile and phraſeology is different in different ages and countries: and as ſoon we may expect to reduce to a certain ſtandard mens habit and dreſs as their forms of ſpeech and manner of writing. Beſides this variety, time alſo throweth a veil upon all ancient writings, upon the claſſic authors

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as well as the ſcriptures; and generally ſpeaking, the older books grow, the more duſt they gather. Several phraſes and expreſſions might be familiar to men in the places where, and at the times when the ſcriptures were firſt promulged, which are now grown obſcure to us, who are removed ſo many climates ſo many centuries from them. I know not how theſe difficulties could poſſibly have been prevented, but by giving a new revelation in every country in every age: and ſurely that would open a wide door for enthuſiaſm and impoſture of all kinds, and the ill conſequences of it would be greater and more notorious than thoſe which ariſe from the natural obſcurity of ancient writings to modern readers. Theſe difficulties are *intrinſecal*, ariſing from the ſcripture itſelf.

II. Others there are, which are *extrinſecal*, and ariſe from outward accidents and cauſes; from the loſs of ancient writings and records; from the various readings of ſcripture in manuſcript and printed copies; from the diviſion of the bible into chapters and verſes; and from the repugnance of tranſlations and comments one to another.

Many obſcure places in ſcripture might perhaps have been cleared up to us by the help of ancient writings and records. The inſpired writers diſdained not the aids of human learning, and frequently made quotations from other authors, other books which are now periſhed. Thus in the Old Teſtament are quoted "the book of Jaſher," (Joſh. X. 13.) "the book of Nathan the prophet, the viſions of Iddo the "ſeer," (2 Chron. IX. 29.) and many others. Thus in the New Teſtament the prophecy of Enoch is quoted by St. Jude, (ver. 14.) the ſtory of Jannes and Jambres is quoted by St. Paul from ſome apocryphal author, (2 Tim. III. 8.) and our Saviour himſelf is ſuppoſed by ſome learned men to quote (Luke XI. 49.) a book called "the "wiſdom of God." Now in theſe and the like inſtances nothing would illuſtrate the citations more than to confer them with the books ſo cited. And even where ancient authors are not directly quoted, yet they might be of great ſervice to us in explaining ſeveral phraſes, ſeveral proverbial ſayings, ſeveral alluſions to ancient cuſtoms and manners; for indeed nothing contributes ſo much to the right underſtand-

ing of any ancient book, as the writings of contemporary authors of the ſame country. But to our great loſs we are deprived of theſe advantages. For how few of the remains of the firſt Chriſtians and companions of the apoſtles are come down to us incorrupt and entire? And as for the Jews, they have undergone ſo many revolutions, ſo many captivities and diſperſions, that their moſt valuable monuments are buried in the ruins of their country. The fountains of pure and genuin antiquity are dried up, and we have ſcarce any thing now left but the lees and dregs of later times.

There are beſides a great number of various readings in ſcripture, to exerciſe the ſagacity and ſkill of the greateſt critics. Many of them are owing to the ignorance of tranſcribers, more to the careleſneſs, and ſome perhaps to deſign. A learned critic (1) is of opinion, that there are no leſs than one thouſand ſix hundred various readings in the New Teſtament occaſioned by the transferring of parallel places out of the margin into the text. And if from one cauſe alone there are ſo many various readings, how many muſt there be from all other cauſes put together? A word, a ſyllable, a letter, may much alter the ſenſe; and how eaſy is it for the moſt curious copyiſts and tranſcribers to miſtake in theſe and the like particulars, eſpecially conſidering the contractions of words and abbreviations uſed in ancient manuſcripts? Such is the fate of all ancient writings as well as the ſcriptures. Nay the ſcriptures have fewer various readings in them, than any other books of that antiquity. And theſe various readings are not of ſuch a nature as totally to obſcure and confound any eſſential doctrin, but only offer to our view different ſenſes, one of which may be approved by one man, and another by another, and all of them perhaps may very well conſiſt with the rule of faith. Now what could have been done for the prevention of theſe inconveniences? What but to have had every librarian and amanuenſis inſpired? and what wild work would have followed from thence I need not obſerve. Inſtead of a true copy of the ſcriptures we ſhould in all likelihood have had new ſcriptures every day.

(1) Millii Prolegom. in Nov. Teſt.

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Another thing that hath not a little diſturbed and obſcured the ſenſe of ſcripture, is the diviſion of the bible into chapters and verſes. This was not the fault of the ſcripture originally, but was the invention of men, and was done not many hundred years ago for the ſake of making the concordance of the bible more uſeful and perfect. Had the diviſion been made with judgment, the damage would have been leſs; but being made at a time when the ſcriptures were not ſo well underſtood as ſometimes they have been, many words are added to one verſe which might more properly be connected with another, and the chapters many times end abruptly, ſometimes in the middle of a ſtory, and ſometimes in the middle of an argument. The inconveniences of ſuch a diviſion are infinitely greater than the conveniences. Ordinary people are too apt to take every diſtinct verſe for a diſtinct aphoriſm, not enough conſidering its relation, perhaps neceſſary relation, to what precedes and what follows; and even the more ſtudious and attentive readers cannot eaſily ſee, through the miſt of the ſeveral partitions, the thred and coherence of the diſcourſe. Take a Greek or a Roman hiſtorian, take the epiſtles of Tully and Pliny, and divide them in like manner into chapters and verſes, and read one parcel to day and another to morrow, and ſee what will be the conſequence: ſee whether we ſhall read them with that delight and improvement we do at preſent; or whether their conſiſtency and connection, their force and beauty will not in a great meaſure be broken and impaired. And what we ſhould eſteem an obſtruction to our underſtanding of the politeſt heathen authors, we cannot ſurely think an help to us in our reading of the ſcriptures.

And then the labors of expoſitors and commentators, which were deſigned for a remedy, are now become a part of the diſeaſe. The caſe is the ſame with the laws of God as with the laws of the land. Read a ſtatute and you will think you ſufficiently underſtand it, but afterwards hear the opinions of council upon it and their explanations, and they will explain the meaning quite away: In like manner many a text of ſcripture ſeemeth plain enough to a man upon his reading it by himſelf and comparing it with the context; but upon conſulting the

the tribe of paraphraſts and annotators he ſcarce knoweth what to think, and inſtead of that one genuin ſenſe which he conceived, he hath ten or twenty ſenſes offered to him, or rather no ſenſe at all. Commentators are a kind of neceſſary evils; there is no doing well without them or with them. It is ſaid of the manna in the wilderneſs, that it was to every one of the Jews of that taſte and flavor which was moſt pleaſing and grateful to him: and in the ſame manner the goſpel of Jeſus Chriſt (that bread which came down from heaven) is ſcarce reliſhed by any two men juſt alike; and yet every one findeth enough in it to juſtify (as he conceives) his own principles and to condemn all others. The truth is, men interpret ſcripture according to their opinions, and frame not their opinions according to ſcripture. They quote the ſcripture, and one would think they underſtood at leaſt what they quote: but alas, in their quotations they manifeſtly regard the bare words more than the meaning, and ſo that there is but ſomething appoſit in the ſound, no matter how remote ſoever it is in the ſignification. The generality of mankind cannot read the ſcripture in the original languages, but are neceſſitated to make uſe of tranſlations, and tranſlations being all made by fallible men, are conſequently none of them infallible. The Engliſh tranſlation may with reaſon pretend to be as perfect as any other; but yet I believe no man will preſume to juſtify it in all things. Thus it is that we read the ſcriptures through colored glaſſes, and then are confident that we ſee there what we really ſee not. But let it be conſidered, that theſe are not the faults of ſcripture, but only of men interpreting ſcripture.

III. Beſides all this we may give a farther account of the obſcurity of ſcripture, as no doubt it was deſigned by providence to ſeveral good ends and uſes.

It might be deſigned as a judgment upon ſome men, and as the teſt and trial of others; as a judgment upon ſome, that ſeeing they might ſee and not perceive, and hearing they might hear and not underſtand; and as the teſt and trial of others, to diſtinguiſh the modeſt and humble readers from the opiniative and confident, thoſe who are deſirous of finding the true meaning of ſcripture and conſtant in profeſſing

feſſing it from thoſe who are " unlearned and unſtable and wreſt the " ſcripture to their own deſtruction."

It might be deſigned to mortify our pride and inſpire us with humility, to give us a juſt ſenſe of our ſhort ſightedneſs and incapacity, and to teach us to acquieſce in the ignorance of things above us, and implicitly to reverence thoſe truths which we cannot perfectly comprehend.

It might be deſigned to furniſh us with an opportunity of exerciſing mutual forgiveneſs and toleration one towards another, that ſince ſome places of ſcripture are obſcure and we muſt neceſſarily differ about the meaning of them, we might ſo differ as to preſerve our charity, and charity in the judgment of St. Paul (1 Cor. XIII. 2.) is to be preferred before ſpiritual gifts, even before " prophecy," and " the under- " ſtanding of all myſteries and all knowlege."

It might be deſigned to engage our attention, and to make us more diligent in the ſtudy of the ſcriptures. Men would think there was no neceſſity of reading the ſcripture accurately, if all was plain, and obvious; but now they diligently peruſe the ſcripture that they may underſtand thoſe paſſages which are difficult, and by this means they obtain a more critical and exact knowlege of thoſe which are eaſy.

It might be deſigned to take off our confidence in men and men's expoſitions of ſcripture, and to ſhow us the neceſſity of depending upon God for his aid and aſſiſtance in the explication of ſcripture, and of praying continually to him (John XVI. 13.) that he would " ſend " us the Spirit of truth to lead us into all truth."

Finally it might be deſigned to create in us a paſſionate longing for that happy place, where all doubts will be cleared, all difficulties will vaniſh: (1 Cor. XIII. 9, 10.) " Now we know in part, and we pro- " pheſy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that " which is in part ſhall be done away."

Upon the whole the difficulties of ſcripture are no reaſonable objection to the divinity of the doctrin: for if difficulties were any objection, they would be ſuch equally to the truth of natural religion as well as revealed, and conclude alike againſt a divine creation as well as againſt

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a divine revelation. The ſcriptures are plain and eaſy and intelligible in every thing eſſential to ſalvation; and whatever is hard to be underſtood, is for that reaſon not neceſſary to be underſtood. And for difficulties in leſſer particulars, a rational account we ſee may be given of them, both of thoſe which are *intrinſecal* and ariſe from the ſcripture itſelf, and of thoſe which are *extrinſecal* and ariſe from outward accidents and cauſes. And beſides all this the obſcurity of ſcripture is deſigned to ſerve ſeveral wiſe ends and uſes of providence. There is not therefore any neceſſity for an infallible interpreter of the word of God; and to ſettle and adjuſt who that infallible interpreter is, would be the greateſt difficulty of all. Every man hath a ſoul to be ſaved, and every man therefore muſt read and judge for himſelf with the beſt aſſiſtances which he can obtain. Only let us practiſe better what is plain in ſcripture, and we ſhall better underſtand what is obſcure; and let us frequently meditate upon the CXIXth pſalm, and fervently pray with the good pſalmiſt; "Open thou mine eyes, that "I may behold wondrous things out of thy law: I am a ſtranger on "the earth, hide not thy commandments from me: O how I love "thy law! it is my meditation all the day: How ſweet are thy words "unto my taſte; yea ſweeter than honey unto my mouth! The righ-"teouſneſs of thy teſtimonies is everlaſting; give me underſtanding, "and I ſhall live."

DISSERTATION LVII.

On the intermediate State of the Soul between Death and the Reſurrection.

THE buſy mind of man is not ſatisfied with conſidering what is preſent, or reflecting upon what is paſt; but is apt to look forward into futurity, and anticipate what is to come. This world affords not

not a ſphere large enough for our imaginations, and therefore we let them looſe into the other. We learn from daily experience that we ſhall all die, and we are aſſured by revelation that we ſhall all riſe again; but what will become of us in the intermediate time, what is the condition of mankind between death and the reſurrection, is an inquiry not ſo eaſy perhaps, as uſeful to determin.

Various are the opinions, which have been ſtarted upon this ſubject by the men of various ſects and parties in religion. Some cut ſhort the diſpute by affirming that the whole man is deſtroyed and extinguiſhed by death: Others allow the ſoul to exiſt indeed after death, but to exiſt only in a ſtate of profound ſleep and inſenſibility. Some conceive that there is one common receptacle of the ſouls of men, juſt and unjuſt, righteous and wicked, and that no difference is made between them before the day of judgment and final retribution of all things: Others again run into the contrary extreme, and ſuppoſe that the ſouls of the righteous immediately upon their departure from their bodies are tranſlated into places of the higheſt felicity, and the ſouls of the wicked into places of the greateſt torment, and that they there and then enjoy the very ſame happineſs, and undergo the very ſame miſery, which they ſhall for ever enjoy, for ever undergo, excepting only that their bodies are not partakers with them of the one or the other. The Church of Rome maintains, that this intermediate ſtate is a ſtate of purgatory, wherein the ſouls of men are refined and purified from their ſins, that they may become fitter objects of the divine mercy: The Church of England ſeemeth to believe, that it is a ſtate of happineſs or miſery, but that neither this happineſs nor this miſery are ſo great, ſo perfect as they will be after the final award at the day of judgment. In the Articles of the Church of England, as they were agreed upon in the reign of Edward VI, this was the fortieth Article. (1) "They who ſay that the ſouls of ſuch as depart hence do "ſleep, being without all ſenſe of feeling and perceiving until the day "of judgment, or affirm that the ſouls die with the bodies, and at the "laſt day ſhall be raiſed up with the ſame, do utterly diſſent from the

(1) See Collier's Eccleſ. Hiſt. Vol. 2. Records LXVI.

" right belief declared unto us in the holy ſcripture." This Article was indeed omitted afterwards in the reign of Queen Elizabeth. It had been better perhaps if ſome other articles had been omitted, and this had been retained. But yet the ſentiments of the Church of England appear ſufficiently from the *Burial of the Dead*; wherein it is ſaid, " Foraſmuch as it hath pleaſed Almighty God of his great mer-
" cy to take unto himſelf the ſoul of our dear brother here departed,
" we therefore commit his body to the ground &c;" and we call upon
" Almighty God, with whom do live the ſpirits of them that depart
" hence in the Lord, and with whom the ſouls of the faithful, after
" they are delivered from the burden of the fleſh, are in joy and fe-
" licity;" and beſeech him " that it may pleaſe him of his gracious
" goodneſs ſhortly to accompliſh the number of his elect, and to
" haſten his kingdom, that we with all thoſe that are departed in the
" true faith of his holy name may have our perfect conſummation and
" bliſs, both in body and ſoul, in his eternal and everlaſting kingdom."

Theſe, I think, are the principal opinions, which have been raiſed upon this queſtion; and which of theſe is reaſonable and true, and which are groundleſs and falſe; which is conſonant to the word of God, and which differ from it, will, I hope, fully appear from the ſix following propoſitions.

But before we enter upon our ſubject, it may be proper to remove ſome difficulties lying in the way to a text of ſcripture, which we ſhall have frequent occaſion to produce in the following diſcourſe. The text I mean is our Saviour's anſwer to the penitent thief on the croſs. In the courſe of this world it ſometimes happens, that the ſame things fall alike to the beſt and to the worſt of men. It was predicted of our Saviour (Iſ. LIII. 12.) that he ſhould be " numbered with the tranſ-
" greſſors:" and accordingly we find him, innocent and righteous as he was, crucified between two thieves. Between the two thieves alſo there was a difference. St. Luke (XXIII. 39, &c.) deſcribes one of them as penitent and begging of Jeſus to remember him in his kingdom. The other evangeliſts ſeem to ſpeak, as if both the thieves had reviled our Saviour; " The thieves alſo which were crucified with
" him

" him caſt the ſame in his teeth," ſays St. Matthew; (XXVII. 44.) " And they that were crucified with him reviled him," ſays St. Mark: (XV. 32.) But St. Luke, who relates the ſtory more particularly, ſays that only one of them railed on our Saviour, and the other rebuked him for it. Some interpreters, and ancient interpreters too, to reconcile this ſeeming difference, have ſuppoſed that both the thieves indeed did revile our Saviour as St. Matthew and St. Mark relate, but afterwards one of them repented and reproved the other as St. Luke relates. But it is not very likely, that one of theſe malefactors ſhould be ſo converted on a ſudden, neither is there any neceſſity of having recourſe to ſuch an expedient, in order to ſolve the difficulty and reconcile the evangeliſts one with another. For it is an uſual figure in all languages to ſpeak of things ſaid or done by one perſon, as if they were ſaid or done by more than one. It would be very eaſy to produce inſtances of this kind out of the beſt Greek and Latin authors; but it may not be amiſs to take notice of ſome parallel examples in holy ſcripture. The Angel ſaith to Joſeph in Egypt (Matt. II. 20.) " Ariſe and take " the young child and his mother, for *they* are dead which ſought the " young child's life," that is Herod was dead, who ſought the young child's life. A woman having anointed our Saviour's head with precious ointment, it is ſaid by St. Matthew (XXVI. 8.) that " when his " diſciples ſaw it *they* had indignation:" whereas from St. John we learn, (XII. 4.) it was only " one of his diſciples, Judas Iſcariot, " Simon's ſon, which ſhould betray him." What in St. Matthew and St. Mark is expreſſed in the ſingular number (Matt. XXVII. 48. Mark XV. 36.) " And ſtraitway one of them ran, and filled a ſpunge full " of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink," in St. John (XIX. 29.) is expreſſed in the plural number, " They filled a " ſpunge with vinegar, and put it upon hyſſop, and put it to his " mouth." We will not go beyond the goſpels for inſtances, and to thoſe already cited we will allege only one more; but one perhaps as remarkable as any that occurs in ſcripture. Three of the four evangeliſts agree, that our Saviour rode into Jeruſalem upon " an aſs's " colt;" but St. Matthew ſaith (XXI. 7.) that they " brought the aſs

" and the colt, and put on them their cloaths, and they ſet him " thereon," επανω αυτων, " on them." I believe this as extraordinary an inſtance of the uſe of the figure, as any that we can find in all ſcripture; but extraordinary as it is, there is an exact parallel to it in Horace himſelf. Epiſt. I. 7.

> *Impoſitus mannis* arvum cœlumque Sabinum
> Non ceſſat laudare:

So true it is that all the ſeeming ſoleciſms in holy writ may be juſtified by parallel inſtances out of the beſt claſſic authors. And now after ſo many inſtances it cannot ſurely ſeem ſtrange, that St. Matthew and St. Mark, ſpeaking conciſely and in general terms, ſhould ſay that the *thieves* reviled our Saviour; when St. Luke entring more particularly into the circumſtances of the ſtory, ſaith that only " one " of the malefactors railed on him ſaying, If thou be Chriſt, ſave thy- " ſelf and us; but the other anſwering rebuked him ſaying, Doſt " not thou fear God, ſeeing thou art in the ſame condemnation," that is ſuffering the ſame puniſhment; " And we indeed juſtly, for " we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done " nothing amiſs." And then with humility great as his faith he beggeth of Jeſus, " Lord remember me when thou comeſt into thy king- " dom." And our Saviour anſwers him with his uſual aſſeveration, " Verily I ſay unto thee, To day ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe." A ſaying worthy of our dying Saviour, and ſuggeſting ſeveral curious and uſeful obſervations; ſo rich and fruitful is every part of holy writ, and ſo fraught with matter for divine meditation. In other writers the ſenſe is ſpread thin like leaf-gold; but we have, as I may ſay, an ingot or wedge of gold in every ſaying of ſcripture. As an acorn contains an oak, ſo every ſentence is a ſermon.

In the book of Job (XIV. 10.) the queſtion is aſked, " Man giveth " up the ghoſt, and where is he?" In this interrogative was plainly implied a negative, that man was no where, as it follows, (ver. 12.) " Man lieth down, and riſeth not till the heavens be no more, " they ſhall not awake, nor be raiſed out of their ſleep." But we

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are enabled to give a better anſwer to this queſtion than could poſſibly be done at any time, before "light and immortality were brought to "light by the goſpel." The whole truth of this doctrin may be compriſed, as I propoſed, in ſix propoſitions.

I. The ſouls of men exiſt after they are ſeparated from their reſpective bodies. This will be readily granted by thoſe, who believe the ſoul to be ſomething diſtinct from the body. Now that the ſoul is ſomething diſtinct from the body, that the one is material the other immaterial, is highly probable, becauſe the qualities and affections of the one are ſo vaſtly different from the qualities and affections of the other. Body is paſſive, and incogitative, and indifferent to motion or reſt, that is being moved it will always move, and being at reſt it will always reſt, unleſs ſome other cauſe obſtructs or incites it; and yet there is ſomething within us, that acteth, that thinketh, that moveth or reſteth according to its own will and pleaſure: and therefore we may probably conclude, that what things in their qualities ſo widely differ, differ as widely too in their ſubſtances. But it is not only probable, that the different qualities of mind and body belong to different ſubſtances; but even demonſtrable, that they cannot all poſſibly belong to the ſame ſubſtance. Some of the known properties of the mind are inconſiſtent, are incompatible with ſome of the known properties of the body. Of this kind are diviſibility and ſelf-conſciouſneſs. Self-conſciouſneſs is one ſimple individual power, and muſt neceſſarily reſult from one ſimple individual eſſence, without parts, without diviſibility: but all matter conſiſts of parts, and being never ſo often divided is ſtill diviſible. Since then ſoul and body are ſo diſtinct in nature and eſſence, the diſſolution of the one by no means infers the diſſolution of the other. Nay more. The deſtruction of any thing being effected only by the divulſion and ſeparation of its parts, that ſubſtance which hath no parts, cannot be ſo divulſed and ſeparated, and conſequently cannot be deſtroyed. It would be eaſy to ſhow how ſomething of the ſame vein of thinking and reaſoning runneth through the Chriſtian fathers and Heathen philoſophers: and indeed the immateriality and immortality of the ſoul

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are ſo cloſely connected and linked together, that whoever allows the former, cannot without manifeſt abſurdity deny the latter.

As this propoſition is agreeable to the principles of reaſon, ſo likewiſe is it agreeable to the whole tenor of divine revelation, which is principally to be regarded and conſulted in diſquiſitions of this nature: and we ſhall find that reaſon and ſcripture mutually confirm and illuſtrate each other. The Jews, who were by no means a philoſophical people, might uſe the ſame word promiſcuouſly for *ſoul* or *body* or *perſons* or *people* and in other ſenſes: but yet there are certain paſſages even in the Old Teſtament, which plainly and clearly diſtinguiſh the ſoul from the body both in the creation of man, and at his diſſolution. When man was created, his body is ſaid (Gen. II. 7.) to have been "formed out of the duſt of the ground," but his ſoul was "breathed "into him by God." When he ſhall die, then it is ſaid that each part ſhall revert to its proper original; (Eccleſ. XII. 7.) "Then "ſhall the duſt return to the earth as it was, and the ſpirit ſhall re-"turn unto God who gave it." Nay in the Old Teſtament an evident diſtinction is made (Eccleſ. III. 21.) "between the ſpirit of a man "that goeth upward, and the ſpirit of a beaſt that goeth downward "to the earth." When the widow of Zarephath's ſon died, (1 Kings XVII. 21, 22.) "Elijah cried unto the Lord, and ſaid, O Lord my "God, I pray thee, let this child's ſoul come into him again;" an evident proof that in his death his ſoul was ſeparated from his body, and ſubſiſted in that ſeparate ſtate. "And the Lord heard the voice "of Elijah, and the ſoul of the child came into him again, and he "revived." But the truth ſhineth out more clearly in the New Teſtament, "life and immortality being brought to light by the goſpel." For do we not read in one apoſtle (1 Pet. III. 19.) of the "ſpirits in "priſon," in another (Heb. XII. 23.) of the "ſpirits of juſt men "made perfect?" Doth not St. Paul (2 Cor. V. 8.) mention our being "abſent from the body," and yet being "preſent with the Lord?" When Chriſt raiſed from death the ruler of the ſynagogue's daughter, is it not ſaid, (Luke VIII. 55.) that "her ſpirit came again, and ſhe "aroſe ſtraitway?" Doth not Chriſt himſelf (Matt. X. 28.) ſpeak of

thoſe

thoſe who "can kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul?" Doth he not promiſe the penitent thief (Luke XXIII. 43.) "To day "ſhalt thou be with me in paradiſe?" and how could the penitent thief be with him in paradiſe, but only in ſpirit? The ſoldiers might break his legs, and take his body from the croſs; but his ſoul they could not touch, that returned unto God who gave it. Doth not Chriſt alſo, when he was dying, "commend his ſpirit into the hands "of God," (Ibid. 46.) while his body was hanging upon the croſs? Doth not St. Stephen in like manner (Acts VII. 59.) "call upon the "Lord Jeſus to receive his ſpirit," when his body was near ſtoned to death? Our Saviour ſpeaketh of the ſoul not only as the principal part of man in ſaying "Fear not them which kill the body," but as the man himſelf; for he ſaith not Thy *ſoul* ſhall be with me in paradiſe, but "Thou ſhalt be with me in paradiſe." (2) The ſoul of man is the man. The body is as it were the veſſel and receptacle of the mind. Whatſoever is done by thy mind, that is done by thee. The body will ſoon return to the duſt of which it was made; but the ſoul, like God who made it, will live for ever.

II. The ſeparate ſouls are ſenſible. For ſince the being of the ſoul depends not upon the body, why ſhould its powers and operations? ſince the ſoul can exiſt apart, why ſhould it not as well perceive and act apart? Indeed while the ſoul is joined to the body, it may be able to do nothing without the help of the body; but this hinders not but it may act in a more inlarged, in a more refined manner, when it is freed from the body. That which now ſeeth and heareth only by the avenues and inlets of two eyes and two ears, may be then all eye, all ear, all ſenſation. And ſo in the reſt of its operations. What it now performs mediately, it may then perform immediately: what it now perceives with the intervention of bodily organs, it may then more exquiſitely perceive when nothing intervenes. And without doubt the body, weak and frail and periſhing as it is at preſent, is the priſon of the ſoul. It may eaſily clog and incumber its ſpeculations, but

(2) Animus cujuſque is eſt quiſque. Corpus quaſi vas eſt aut aliquod animi receptaculum; ab animo tuo quiquid agitur, id agitur a te. Cicero. Tuſc. Diſp. I. 22.

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can never raiſe and improve them. Certainly that, which itſelf is void of thought and reaſon, cannot poſſibly be the cauſe of thought and reaſon; and an intelligent being muſt then be moſt intelligent, when deveſted of that which is unintelligent. Nor let any one doubt or heſitate (3), becauſe he cannot conceive what ſort of thing the ſoul is without the body, for neither can he conceive what ſort of thing it is within the body, or how it exiſts and performs its operations. Our ignorance is no diſproof of any thing. Of the two it appears harder and more difficult to conceive, how a living ſoul can operate when united with a mortal body, than when freed and ſeparated from ſuch a body.

This truth we may yet farther confirm by holy writ. When St. Paul was "caught up into the third heaven," (2 Cor. XII. 2.) he knew not "whether he was in the body or out of the body:" but how could he have been ignorant herein, had it not been poſſible for him to perceive apart from the body? The ſame apoſtle (V. 7.) ſtileth the preſent life "walking by faith," and the ſtate after death "walking by ſight." In his Epiſtle to the Philippians he ſaith, (I. 21, &c.) "For me to live is Chriſt, and to die is gain. But "if I live in the fleſh, this is the fruit of my labor: yet what I ſhall "chooſe I wot not. For I am in a ſtrait betwixt two, having a deſire "to depart and to be with Chriſt, which is far better: Nevertheleſs "to abide in the fleſh is more needful for you." But how could death be "gain," or how could it be "better for him to depart and "to be with Chriſt," if being dead he ſhould be deprived of all ſenſe and perception? Would it not have been greater "gain" to himſelf, as well as "more needful" for his diſciples, "to abide in the fleſh," and to continue "the fruit of his labor," than to ſink into a ſtate of abſolute inability and inaction? In another place (1 Theſſ. V. 10.) he ſaith that "Chriſt died for us, that whether we wake or ſleep, we "ſhould live together with him:" but how can we be ſaid to "live "together with him," if we have no communion with him after

(3) Hæc reputent iſti, qui negant animum ſine corpore ſe intelligere poſſe; videbunt, quem in ipſo corpore intelligant. Cic. Tuſc. Diſp. l. 22.

death,

death, and there is no ſenſe remaining in us? Our Saviour proveth a future ſtate (Luke XX. 38.) from Moſes calling "the Lord the God "of Abraham, and the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob; For "he is not a God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto "him:" but how can the dead be ſaid to be "living," and to "live "unto God," if they lie without all ſenſation and reflection? When our Saviour promiſed the penitent thief, "To day ſhalt thou be with "me in paradiſe," where was the difference, or what was the advantage, whether he was or was not with Chriſt, whether he was in paradiſe or in any other place, if he could have no ſenſe nor knowlege of the preſence of Chriſt, or of the delights of paradiſe? And how wretched and miſerable is the ſubterfuge of thoſe, who to evade the force of this argument, would either read the text in a different manner, "Verily I ſay unto thee to day," or "to day I ſay unto thee, "Thou ſhalt be with me in paradiſe;" or aſſert that "to day" is ſometimes uſed in ſcripture for a longer term than the time preſent, "To day" that is perhaps ſome hundreds or thouſands years hence, "thou ſhalt be with me in paradiſe." Such forced and unnatural interpretations are beneath all criticiſm; they ſufficiently refute and expoſe their own abſurdity. In Iſaiah (LVII. 2.) the ſeparate ſouls are ſaid to "walk in their uprightneſs:" and in ſeveral places of the Revelation they are repreſented as "crying with a loud voice," as "ſinging," as "worſhipping God," as "ſerving him day and night." And indeed moſt of the paſſages, which prove the ſeparate exiſtence of the ſoul, prove no leſs ſtrongly its ſeparate intelligence.

It is true there are ſeveral texts of ſcripture, which ſpeak of death under the image of *ſleep*: and from hence ſome have therefore conceived that the ſtate after death is a ſtate of ſleep, that the ſoul all the while lieth dormant, that all its powers and faculties are aſleep, and it hath no notion, no apprehenſion, no ſenſe of any thing, till it ſhall be waked and rouſed by the ſound of the laſt trumpet. But theſe texts, I conceive, will all upon examination be found to relate only to the body; or if applied to the ſoul are purely metaphorical, and ſignify nothing but a ſtate of undiſturbed peace and quiet. *Death*

in almoſt all languages, and in almoſt all authors, as well orators as poets, is compared to *ſleep:* but ſurely it is againſt the nature and genius of all language to underſtand and interpret metaphors and figures litterally and according to the ſtrict and proper meaning of the words. The ſame ſcriptures, which repreſent the dead as ſleeping, repreſent alſo the ſeparate ſouls as living and acting, as we have ſeen in abundance of paſſages: and plain texts are not to be explained by figurative ones, but figurative texts are to be explained by plain ones. While the ſoul is in the body, it is not ſo properly the ſoul that ſleepeth as the body; and wherefore ſhould we believe it to labor under ſuch a perpetual obſtruction, when it ſhall be freed from the body? A ſoul without all life and motion, without all ſenſe and perception, appears to be a contradiction in nature. It is in effect no ſoul, no being at all. It is a kind of annihilation of a thinking ſubſtance to be deprived of all thought for ſo many ages, and it muſt be a kind of a new creation to reſtore it to conſciouſneſs again. The enemies of religion will readily allow, that the ſoul may ſink into a lethargy, may ſink into nothing: but it will therefore be the more difficult to perſuade them, that it will ever riſe again; they will rather believe, that being once ſunk and loſt it will be ſunk and loſt for ever.

III. The ſeparate ſouls are not in a ſtate of purgatory. The ſcripture ſaith nothing of purgatory; and ſilence in ſuch an important point is an argument, an unanſwerable argument, againſt it. But the words of ſcripture not only not aſſert it, but by direct conſequence deny it; not only not evince it to be true, but prove it to be manifeſtly falſe. That phraſe of *ſleeping* applied to the dead could ſcarce be uſed with any propriety, if immediately after death a dreadful fire ſhould receive us, and torment us we know not how long. We read on the contrary that when Lazarus died, (Luke XVI. 22.) he was "carried by the "angels into Abraham's boſom:" and the ſame day the penitent thief was crucified, he was "in paradiſe." If it was neceſſary for the ſouls of men to be purged and purified by fire before they can be admitted to the preſence of God, it was neceſſary for the ſoul of this thief to undergo this purging and purifying after the crimes which he had committed,

mitted, and for which he profeſſeth himſelf to ſuffer juſtly. But from this paſſage we learn, that his ſoul was immediately conveyed into "paradiſe." And is there any reaſon for ſuppoſing his caſe to be different from that of other men, whoſe pardon is ſealed in heaven before they go hence and are no more ſeen? That his caſe was not different from that of other ſuch men, that they are in purgatory no more than he, the ſcripture aſſures us. For St. Paul ſaith, that "to die is gain;" and that when we are "abſent from the body," we are "preſent with "the Lord." The prophet Iſaiah informs us, (LVIII. 2.) that when "the righteous periſheth he ſhall enter into peace." And St. John is commanded from heaven to write (Rev. XIV. 13.) "Bleſſed are the "dead, which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, ſaith the Spi-"rit, that they may reſt from their labors, and their works do follow "them." And now can light be more oppoſit to darkneſs, than theſe truths are repugnant to the doctrin of purgatory? For how could Lazarus be "in Abraham's boſom;" how could the penitent thief be "in "paradiſe;" how can death be "gain," and how can we be ſaid, when we are abſent from the body, to be "preſent with the Lord;" how can the righteous, when he periſheth, "enter into peace;" how can thoſe, who die in the Lord, "reſt from their labors;" if after death the ſouls of men, even of thoſe men who die in the Lord, are tormented in a purging penal fire, till they obtain their acquittance and diſcharge through the prayers and maſſes of the living. To theſe paſſages let me ſubjoin the appoſit expreſſions of the Wiſe Man, (Wiſd. III. 1, 2, &c.) "The ſouls of the righteous are in the hand of God, "and there ſhall no torment touch them: In the ſight of the unwiſe "they ſeemed to die, and their departure is taken for miſery, and "their going from us to be utter deſtruction; but they are in peace: "For though they be puniſhed in the ſight of men, yet is their hope "full of immortality." Indeed nothing can be alleged from ſcripture in favor of purgatory, unleſs it be a text or two one knoweth not whether more fooliſhly or more wickedly perverted, when there are many more plain texts, which bear directly againſt it. And from pure and genuin antiquity there is as little pretence for it, as there is from ſcripture;

ture; for the doctrin of purgatory, as it is at preſent profeſſed in the Church of Rome, was not heard of till about 500 years after Chriſt, and was not fully eſtabliſhed till ſome centuries after that. In ſhort it hath ſo little foundation in ſcripture or antiquity, that ſeveral even of the writers of that communion have been forced to acknowlege, that it cannot be proved by the one or the other; there is no fuel to be found in either to kindle or keep up that flame. Whence then cometh it to paſs that they ſtill retain it? The anſwer is obvious, It is too beneficial an article to be parted with. It is the *gain*, and not the *godlineſs* that recommends it. The great riches, which by this means accrue to the Church, are bribes ſufficient to engage their tongues and pens in its defenſe. But woe unto them, who as the apoſtle ſaith (2 Cor. II. 17.) "corrupt the word of God," or rather "make merchandiſe of the word of God."

IV. The ſeparate ſouls have different manſions allotted to them, the ſouls of good men have one, and the ſouls of wicked men another, and enter into them immediately after their ſeparation from their reſpective bodies. For even the *place*, I apprehend, contributes ſomething to the happineſs or miſery of ſeparate ſpirits. We cannot indeed give any tolerable account, how material things ſhould affect beings immaterial; but that they do really affect them, we are informed by every moment's experience. But ſhould the place have little influence upon them, yet may they be greatly influenced by the company and intercourſe one of another: and upon this account, if not upon others, it ſeemeth reaſonable to conclude, that the places of their abode are different.

This opinion we may alſo advance not without ſufficient authority from the word of God. In the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus, do we not find the former in "Hades" or "hell," the latter in "Abraham's boſom:" and is it not expreſly ſaid, that between them there is "a great gulf fixed," ſo that they cannot paſs the one to the other?

(4) Οὑτω μαρτυρησας επορευθη εις τον οφειλομενον τοπον της δοξης.

Οὑτως απηλλαξη τε κοσμε, και εις τον ἁγιον τοπον επορευθη. Cap. 5.

Αἱ γενεαι πασαι ἑως τησδε ἡμερας παρηλθον, αλλ' οἱ εν αγαπῃ τελειωθεντες, καῖα την τε Θεε χαριν,

other? Can we imagin the ſpirits in "priſon," and the ſpirits of juſt men made "perfect," to be in one and the ſame place? If there is one common receptacle of the ſouls of all men, why doth our Saviour particularly promiſe the penitent thief, "To day ſhalt thou be with "me in paradiſe?" "To day," after the ſeparation of his ſoul and his body. And can we poſſibly believe, that his impenitent brother was admitted into the ſame place? Or rather, as the one was received up into the region of happineſs, may we not be confident, that the other was thruſt down to the region of miſery? And laſtly why is the traitor Judas (Acts I. 25.) ſaid to go to "his own place," if good and bad men have not their proper places appointed for them? Nothing certainly is more equitable or more reaſonable than that the ſouls of men ſhould be conſigned over to different places and ſtations in the next world according to their different behaviour in this life. Reaſon believes it, and ſcripture confirms it.

To this it might be farther added, that it is not only the doctrin of ſcripture, but more expreſly and fully of the apoſtolical fathers, thoſe I mean who were the ſcholars and immediate ſucceſſors of the apoſtles, one of whoſe teſtimonies is worth a hundred of others in after ages: and accordingly whenever they ſpeak of the departed ſouls, they generally uſe the phraſes of *their own*, their *own proper*, their *due*, their *appointed* places. The firſt and moſt valuable piece of Chriſtian antiquity is the epiſtle of Clement, a perſon of whom St. Paul maketh honorable mention, (Phil. IV. 3.) calling him not only his "fellow-"laborer," but one "whoſe name was in the book of life." And the epiſtle itſelf was ſo highly valued by the primitive Church, that it was wont to be read in their public aſſemblies. In this epiſtle ſpeaking of St. Peter he ſaith, (4) 'Thus having ſuffered martyrdom, he 'went to the *due place of glory*;' and ſpeaking of St. Paul he ſaith, 'Thus he departed out of the world; and went to *the holy place*:' and afterwards ſpeaking in general he ſaith, 'All the generations to

ριν, εχουσιν χωρον ευσεβων, οἱ φανερωθησονται εν τῃ επισκοπῃ της βασιλειας τȣ Χριστȣ· γεγραπται γαρ Εισελθε εις τα ταμιεια μικρον ὁσον, ἑως ȣ̓ παρελθῃ ἡ ὀργη και θυμος μȣ, και μνησθησομαι ἡμερας αγαθης, και αναστησω ὑμας εκ των θηκων ὑμων. Cap. 50.

'this

'this day are paſſed away, but they who have been made perfect in 'love by the grace of God poſſeſs *the region of the pious*, who ſhall 'be manifeſted in the viſitation of the kingdom of Chriſt. For it is 'written (Iſ. XXVI. 20.) "Enter into thy chambers for a little ſpace, "till mine anger and indignation paſs away, and I will remember the "good day, and will raiſe you up out of your graves." Polycarp the diſciple of St. John and Biſhop of Smyrna, whoſe praiſe is great in the Revelation under the name of the angel of the Church in Smyrna, ſpeaking of the apoſtles and other martyrs of that age, ſaith (5), 'All 'theſe have not run in vain, but in faith and righteouſneſs, and are 'gone to *the place that was due to them from the Lord.*' Ignatius another of St. John's diſciples and Biſhop of Antioch ſummeth up this whole doctrin very briefly and clearly, (6) 'There are two things to-'gether ſet before us death and life, and every one ſhall go to *his proper* '*place.*' We might ſhow this alſo to have been the belief and doctrin of ſucceeding ages; but we will quote only one teſtimony from Juſtin Martyr, which concludes full to our purpoſe. In his dialogue with Trypho the Jew, ſpeaking of the catholic doctrins which were taught him when he firſt became a Chriſtian, he mentions this as one of them, (7) that 'the ſouls of the *godly* abide in ſome *better place*, but *unrigh-*'*teous* and *wicked* ſouls in a *worſe*, expecting the time of judgment.'

Under this head it is beſt to forbear inquiring, as ſome curious and ſpeculative men have inquired, what and where theſe different places are. For that is a thing, wherein we cannot ſo much as arrive at probability; and all our reſearches of this kind are only a more ſpecious and ſolemn ſort of idleneſs and vanity. We may collect from ſcripture that *heaven* is the ſeat of the bleſſed, and *Gehenna* or *hell* the place of the damned after the reſurrection and day of judgment, and in the mean time the ſeparate ſouls are in *Hades* that is in ſome inviſible region; and in this inviſible region different ſouls poſſeſs different parts, ſome are in "priſon," others are in "paradiſe," and lie as it were in "Abraham's

(5) Polycarp. Epiſt. Chap. 9. Wake's Collection.

(6) Επικειται τα δυο ὁμα, ὁτε θανατος και ἡ ζωη, και ἑκαστος εις τον ἰδιον τοπον μελλει χωρειν. Epiſt. ad Magneſios.

(7) Τας

" Abraham's boſom;" and for the reſt the ſcripture is ſilent, and man ought to be ſilent too.

But under this head it may be proper to obſerve, that our Saviour did not deſcend into hell, in the intermediate time between his death and his reſurrection, either to ſuffer the torments of the damned, or to preach to the ſpirits in priſon, as ſome have ſuppoſed, and was aſſerted in the firſt draught of our Articles in the reign of Edward VI. Theſe opinions are founded, the one upon the words of our creed, and the other upon a paſſage of St. Peter. But the words of our creed " He de-" ſcended into hell," are capable of another interpretation; *Hades* or *hell* being not properly the place of the damned, for that is called *Gehenna* in the New Teſtament; but in general only the inviſible ſtate of departed ſouls. So likewiſe the paſſage of St. Peter will admit of another interpretation, (1 Pet. III. 18, 19, 20.) " Chriſt alſo hath " once ſuffered for ſins, the juſt for the unjuſt, (that he might bring " us to God) being put to death in the fleſh, but quickened by the " ſpirit; By which alſo he went and preached unto the ſpirits in pri-" ſon; Which ſometime were diſobedient, when once the long ſuffer-" ing of God waited in the days of Noah." For it is not meant, that the ſpirit of Chriſt after his death " went and preached unto the ſpi-" rits in priſon;" but only that Chriſt by his ſpirit manifeſted him-ſelf unto the patriarchs of old, and preached unto them who were " diſobedient in the days of Noah," and are ſince their death " ſpi-" rits in priſon." And that it ſhould admit of this or ſome other interpretation is evident from hence, becauſe the ſoul of our Saviour went after death into *paradiſe*. As his body was laid in the grave, ſo his ſoul was in *Hades*, the place of departed ſouls in general, and in that part of Hades called *paradiſe*, the place of good ſouls in particular, after death till their reſurrection.

V. The ſeparate ſouls are in a ſtate of happineſs or miſery, as they have behaved themſelves well or ill in this life. This is ſo plain and evident from ſcripture, and is beſides ſo juſt and equitable in itſelf,

(7) Τας μεν των ευσεβων (ψυχας) εν κρειττονι τοι χωρῳ μενειν, τας δε αδικας και πονηρας εν χειρονι, τον της κρισεως εκδεχομενας χρονον. Dial. cum Tryph. p. 223.

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that methinks it needeth not any particular proof. Some few of the texts already alleged will anſwer our preſent purpoſe. As there are " ſpirits in priſon," ſo there are " ſpirits of juſt men made perfect." As " bleſſed are thoſe who die in the Lord," ſo doubtleſs curſed are thoſe who die in their ſins. As Lazarus was " comforted" in Abraham's boſom, ſo the rich man was in hell " tormented." As the penitent thief was in " paradiſe" the region of happineſs, ſo we may be ſure his unrepenting brother had his portion in the region of miſery. To be in *paradiſe* is certainly not to be in a ſtate of utter inſenſibility, and much leſs in a ſtate of torment, but in a ſtate of delight and happineſs. When our Saviour promiſed this to the penitent thief, he promiſed ſomething to be ſure, that the penitent thief underſtood. Paradiſe or the garden of Eden was the ſeat of Adam in the ſtate of innocence; and being a place that abounded with all ſorts of delights, it came thence by an eaſy figure to ſignify the place of good ſouls after death, waiting for their reſurrection. And in this ſenſe the word was ſo familiar among the Jews, that it was a form of bleſſing among them, eſpecially when one lay dying, " May his ſoul be in the gar-" den of Eden; May he have his portion in paradiſe; May the gates " of paradiſe be opened to him;" and the like. The penitent thief therefore might very well underſtand, and without doubt did underſtand, that when our Saviour promiſed him that he ſhould be with him in paradiſe, he promiſed him that he ſhould be with him in a ſtate of happineſs.

It being then ſo clear and undeniable that the ſeparate ſouls are in a ſtate of happineſs or miſery, the difficulty that now remains is to determin wherein this happineſs and miſery conſiſt. We may, I think, collect from ſcripture, that the reſolution of their doubts, the improvement of their knowlege, the conſcience of a well ſpent life, the divine ſociety of good ſpirits, the actual poſſeſſion of much good, and the certain expectation of more, are principal ingredients in the happineſs of the dead who die in the Lord: And on the other hand the miſery of the dead who die in their ſins conſiſts in the very reverſe of theſe, in perplexity and confuſion of mind, in remorſe and deſpair, in the wretched

wretched ſociety of evil ſpirits, in a lively ſenſe of great torments at preſent, and the dreadful apprehenſion of greater yet to come. Thus far, I conceive, the light of revelation conducts us in our inquiry, and when we would advance one ſtep farther, we can diſcover little beſides our own ignorance and uncertainty. Separate ſpirits may be made happy or miſerable in a thouſand different manners, whereof we can at preſent frame but very obſcure, very imperfect ideas; ſuch as "eye hath "not ſeen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man "to conceive."

A queſtion is often agitated, Whether the departed ſouls have any knowlege one of another in their ſeparate ſtate: and I cannot but think this one great addition to their knowlege and to their happineſs. That the Jews had ſome notions of this ſociety and intercourſe of ſpirits, appears evidently from their uſual phraſe of being "gathered unto their "fathers," by which they meant ſomething more than being laid in the ſame ſepulchres with their anceſtors. When Jacob lamented over his ſon Joſeph, and ſaid (Gen. XXXVII. 35.) "I will go down into "the grave unto my ſon, mourning;" he could not mean that his body ſhould be depoſited in the ſame grave with his ſon, whom he believed to be devoured by wild beaſts; but that he ſhould go to his ſon, and they ſhould meet together in the aſſembly of departed ſpirits. In like manner David ſaid of his dead child, (2 Sam. XII. 23.) "I "ſhall go to him, but he ſhall not return to me." The phraſe of being "in Abraham's boſom" is plainly formed upon a ſuppoſition, that good ſpirits are admitted to the congregation of the patriarchs and other holy men, and there partake as it were of a feaſt and entertainment with them. Our Saviour implies as much in ſaying to the penitent thief, "*Thou* ſhalt be *with me* in paradiſe;" they ſhould be *both together* in paradiſe. All things in parables are not to be taken too ſtrictly and according to the letter; but the whole parable of the Rich man and Lazarus is plainly founded on a ſuppoſition, that the ſouls of men in the next world have knowlege one of another, and beſides have ſome knowlege of what is tranſacted here upon earth. And in the Revelation they are frequently repreſented as ſinging and

worſhipping God in conſorts and companies. Indeed there can be no paradiſe without ſociety. Solitary pleaſures are ſcarce any pleaſures. Happineſs is doubled by being communicated. And have we faculties and organs fitted for diſcourſe and converſe here; and will there be no means of correſpondence and communication hereafter? Can we pour out all our thoughts, entertaining and improving one another, while we are in theſe fleſhly tabernacles; and will there not be ſomething more noble and refined in a converſation of ſouls? The heathen philoſphers, even before our Saviour, were ſenſible that in this ſociety of ſpirits muſt conſiſt a great part of the happineſs of a future ſtate. Plato maketh Socrates, in his apology a little before his death, promiſe himſelf wonderful delight and improvement in the company of Muſæus, Heſiod, Homer, and other excellent men who lived and died before him; ſo that he profeſſes (8) He could be willing to die many times to attain ſuch a life. In like manner Cicero repreſents old Cato not only as comforting himſelf with this notion, but as triumphing in it and perfectly longing for his death. 'O happy day, (9) ſays he, when 'I ſhall leave this troubleſome life, this waſh and ſink of a world, 'and go to that divine council and company of ſpirits; for I ſhall go 'not only to thoſe famous men whom I have ſeen or of whom I have 'heard and read, but alſo to my Cato, than whom a better man or 'better ſon was never born; whoſe body was burnt by me, when mine 'ought rather to have been burnt by him; but his ſoul not forſaking 'me but often looking back, went to thoſe places where he knew I 'muſt alſo one day come: which my misfortune I have ſeemed to 'bear bravely, not that I have really borne it with an even mind, but 'I comforted myſelf with the thought, that this ſeparation would be 'only for a little while, and we ſhould ſoon meet again.' If a Heathen could think and talk in this exalted ſtrain, how ought a Chriſtian to be raiſed and tranſported with the thought of whither he is going, (Heb.

(8) Εγω μεν γαρ πολλακις εθελω τεθναναι, ει ταυτα εστιν αληθη. Apol. Cap. 22.

(9) O præclarum diem, cum ad illud divinum animorum concilium cœtumque proficiſcar, et cum ex hac turba et colluvione diſcedam: proficiſcar enim non ad eos ſolum viros de quibus ante dixi, ſed etiam ad Catonem meum, quo nemo vir melior natus eſt, nemo pietate præſtantior; cujus a me corpus

(Heb. XII. 22, &c.) " to the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect, to an " innumerable company of angels, to Jeſus the mediator of the new " covenant, and to God the judge of all!" (1 Cor. XV. 35.) " O " death where is thy ſting?" What is there ſad or terrible in death to a ſoul armed and fortified with theſe reflections? Theſe are enough to make us (Rom. VIII. 37.) " more than conquerors through him that " loved us."

Another queſtion will naturally enough ariſe out of this propoſition, Whether the departed ſouls have any ſenſe of thoſe things which are tranſacted here upon earth? I anſwer, it is probable they have, ſo far as their own happineſs or miſery is concerned: and this opinion is countenanced by the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus, and by " the joy" that is ſaid (Luke XV. 7.) " to be in heaven at the re- " pentance of a ſinner." And if one may be permitted to make conjectures in things of this nature, I conceive, the comfort and happineſs of righteous ſouls may partly conſiſt in the contemplation of thoſe good effects, which their great and virtuous actions have upon poſterity; and in the certain expectation of a more exceeding weight of glory, which on that very account will be conferred on them: And in like manner the deſpair and miſery of wicked ſouls may in ſome meaſure ſpring from their obſerving how the contagion of their own examples ſtill operates and diffuſes itſelf in ſucceeding generations, and by that mean aggravates their guilt, and inhances their condemnation. But after all this is a diſquiſition, wherein as it is not very material, ſo neither is it poſſible for us to come to a clear and certain reſolution.

VI. Though the ſeparate ſouls are happy or miſerable, yet are they not ſo happy, nor ſo miſerable as they will be after the reſurrection. And foraſmuch as this follows not immediately from the nature of things, but depends altogether upon the will and counſel of God, by the word of God only it can be proved and eſtabliſhed. Though St. John ſaith in one place, that " bleſſed are the dead who die in the

corpus crematum eſt, quod contra decuit ab illo meum; animus vero non me deſerens ſed reſpectans, in ea profecto loca diſceſſit, quo mihi ipſi cernebat eſſe veniendum: quem ego meum caſum fortiter ferre viſus ſum, non quod æquo animo ferrem, ſed me ipſe conſolabar exiſtimans non longinquum inter nos digreſſum et diſceſſum fore. Cic. de Senect. Cap. 23.

" Lord;" yet in another (Rev. XI. 18.) he informs us, that the ſaints are not to receive their " reward" till the " time when the dead ſhall " be judged," and " then" too " are they to be deſtroyed which " deſtroy the earth." Though St. Paul knew that " to die was gain, " and that it was better to depart and be with Chriſt than to abide in " the fleſh;" yet " the crown of righteouſneſs (2 Tim. IV. 8.) which " was laid up for him" was not to be given him till " that day," the great day of the Lord, and then " not to him only but unto all " them alſo that love the appearing of the judge." When the ſame apoſtle prayeth for " mercy" upon any one, (2 Tim. I. 18.) or denounceth " deſtruction," all thoſe things are referred not to the hour of death, but to " that day, (2 Theſſ. I. 10.) when the Lord ſhall " come to be glorified in his ſaints, and to be admired in all them that " believe." The higheſt happineſs, the ſupreme glory, and the beatific viſion as it is uſually called, are no where promiſed to the departed ſouls immediately after death; but only peace, and reſt, and comfort, and the like before the reſurrection. Moreover the apoſtle writing to the Hebrews (XI. 39, 40.) ſaith that all the old ſaints, who have " obtained a good report through faith, had not received the promiſe, " that they without us ſhould not be made perfect:" that is (as the fathers rightly expound it) they had not yet attained to the heavenly promiſes and the ſupreme beatitude; they wait alſo for our conſummation, one and the ſame time being appointed for all to receive their crowns of glory. When is it that thoſe who do iniquity are to be " caſt into the furnace of fire?" When is it that the righteous are to " ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom of their Father?" Our Saviour himſelf informs us (Matt. XIII. 39, &c.) " at the end of the " world."

Not that the intermediate ſtate is therefore an imaginary ſcene, or that happineſs to be counted for nothing, for the departed patriarchs and ſaints, as our Saviour himſelf ſaith (Luke XX. 38.) " all live unto God." But death and the reſurrection are ſo frequently joined together, no reckoning made of the time intervening, becauſe in that interval perhaps no very conſiderable change will be made, but ſuch as

as men die, ſuch alſo they will in great meaſure riſe again. The leſſer happineſs is obſcured and eclipſed, and becomes as nothing in compariſon of the greater glory which ſhall be revealed in us. The apoſtles alſo ſpeak often of the end of the world and of the day of judgment as now impending and at the doors; the thing is fixed and certain, and the intermediate time by reaſon of its comparative brevity is paſſed over in ſilence, "a thouſand years" being with the Lord "as "one day." The intermediate ſtate is certainly a ſtate of happineſs, but of happineſs not yet complete and perfect in all its parts. Chriſt ſaith that Lazarus was carried by the angels into Abraham's boſom, and the ſoul of the penitent thief he brought with himſelf into paradiſe; but by "paradiſe" and "Abraham's boſom" the ancients both Jews and Chriſtians did not underſtand the kingdom of heaven, the ſupreme glory, and the beatific viſion of God, but only the ſtate and place of ſeparate good ſouls waiting for their reſurrection. Chriſt ſaith that the munificent (Luke XIV. 14.) ſhall be "recompenſed at the "reſurrection of the juſt;" but what occaſion is there for a reſurrection of the juſt, if their ſouls are already in poſſeſſion of their chief good, their higheſt felicity and glory? St. Paul ſaith (2 Cor. V. 10.) that "we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that "every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that "he hath done, whether it be good or bad." And indeed we are all along directed in ſcripture to expect our final retribution only at the day of judgment. But what occaſion is there for a day of judgment, if the ſentence is already paſſed and executed? why ſhould men be called to render an account of thoſe actions, for which they have already received their full reward or puniſhment? Certainly it would be an unneceſſary proceſs, and a ſolemnity without ſignification, if there ſhould not then be made an addition, a very conſiderable addition, to the happineſs of the good and to the miſery of the wicked.

It appears then that the ſouls of men exiſt when ſeparated from their reſpective bodies, that in their ſeparate ſtate they are ſenſible, that they are not in a ſtate of purgatory, that they have different manſions allotted to them, that they are happy or miſerable, but not ſo happy

nor ſo miſerable as they will finally be after the great day of account. But all things that terminate in ſpeculation, and no way relate to practice, are not worth our pains and inquiry; let us therefore conſider how each of the foregoing propoſitions may influence our manners.

1. Since the ſouls of men ſubſiſt after the diſſolution of their bodies, we may not only arm ourſelves againſt the fears of death and annihilation, but may alſo learn the true worth and excellency of the ſoul above the body, and the regard we ſhould therefore pay to the one before the other. We ſee that the ſoul is only a gueſt, a ſojourner, in the body; and ſhall we then live as if they were never to be ſeparated? We ſee that theſe earthly tabernacles will one time or other moulder away, and yet there is another, a nobler part of us that will ſtill ſurvive; and ſhall we then be ſollicitous for the periſhing concerns of the former, and neglectful of the everlaſting welfare of the latter? A wiſe man will certainly proportion his eſteem of things to their real worth, and will regard them more or leſs, as they are more or leſs durable and laſting.

2. Since the ſeparate ſouls are indued with ſenſe and perception, we ſhould not ſubject and inſlave our minds to our bodies, but ſhould ſometimes raiſe ourſelves as it were above ourſelves, and ſuperior to the things of the fleſh contemplate thoſe of the ſpirit. Spiritual objects muſt doubtleſs be the principal entertainment of beings purely ſpiritual: but how ſhall we dwell with delight on ſpiritual objects, when our thoughts have been wholly ſunk and immerſed in matter? how ſhall we rightly enjoy the intellectual pleaſures, when we have all our life time been wallowing in the ſenſual? We ſhall carry with us into the next world the ſame inclinations and affections, the ſame diſpoſitions of mind and temper which we have in this: and we ſhould therefore accuſtom and inure ourſelves to ſpiritual entertainments here, if we would have any reliſh, any taſte of them hereafter.

3. Since the ſeparate ſouls are not in a ſtate of purgatory, this ſhould inſtruct us to fight our Chriſtian warfare, not truſting in the righteouſneſs of others, but exerting our own cares and endevors, not relying upon the prayers and maſſes the pardons and indulgences of men, but

but upon the alone ſufficient merits of our bleſſed Saviour and Redeemer. We muſt ſtand or fall by what we ourſelves have done in life, and not by what others ſhall do for us after death. We muſt not expect to attain heaven by feeing and retaining others to intercede and pray for us, but by living ourſelves " ſoberly righteouſly and godlily in " this preſent world." Let us therefore " to day while it is called to day " work out our ſalvation with fear and trembling, for the night cometh " when no man can work." Nor let the example of the penitent thief, which hath been ſo often cited in this diſcourſe, encourage us (as ſome Chriſtians have from hence been encouraged) to rely upon a death-bed repentance. The penitent thief was accepted indeed in his laſt moments; but wherefore was he accepted? not merely upon his repentance, but upon his repentance and profeſſion of his faith in Jeſus; and though he did not make this profeſſion till he came to die, yet he made it as ſoon as ever he had an opportunity of making it; and made it nobly, when our Saviour was in the loweſt circumſtances of diſtreſs, and his enemies were triumphing over him. And they who act in like manner, will in like manner be accepted. Our Saviour did nothing in this caſe, but what he will do in all others of the ſame nature. He will accept the greateſt of ſinners, if repenting heartily of their former ſins they embrace the goſpel as ſoon as ever they have an opportunity of embracing it, and live accordingly be the time they live afterwards longer or ſhorter. But what is this to the caſe of thoſe who have been born and bred in a Chriſtian country; who " from children have known the holy ſcriptures," and have " been " taught as the truth is in Jeſus;" who are conſtantly invited to their duty, have all the opportunities of knowing it, have all the abilities of doing it, and yet run on ſtill in their career of wickedneſs, " as the horſe ruſheth into the battle?" What ground is there in this ſtory of the penitent thief, or indeed what ground is there in any part of ſcripture, for ſuch perſons to think that a few tears at laſt will waſh away all former guilt, and an hour of ſorrow atone for a life of ſin? As they have ſown, ſo they muſt reap. Have they planted briers and thorns, and can they expect to gather lilies and roſes? Have they lived wickedly,

wickedly, and do they hope to die comfortably? A death-bed repentance is certainly the beſt thing that a dying ſinner can do, and therefore is not abſolutely to be diſcouraged. Its availing or not muſt be left to God, who can alone judge of its ſincerity. But ſurely it is the highth of folly and madneſs to truſt to ſuch an expedient, and to continue in ſin now, that we may repent hereafter. Nay but if ever we will be good, if ever we will be happy, we muſt begin this moment. (2 Cor. VI. 2.) "Behold now is the accepted time, behold "now is the day of ſalvation." When the bridegroom cometh, it will be too late to furniſh ourſelves with oil; and we may knock and cry "Lord, lord," but he will not open to us. Oh let us therefore (Iſa. LV. 6.) "ſeek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon "him while he is near!" Oh let us conſider (Luke XIX. 42.) "the "things which belong unto our peace, before they are hid from our "eyes!" And let us (Heb. III. 13.) "exhort one another daily while "it is called to day, leſt any of us be hardened through the deceitful-"neſs of ſin."

4. Since the ſeparate ſouls have different manſions aſſigned them, we need not murmur nor be ſurpriſed, that in the preſent ſtate of things the tares are permitted to grow up with the wheat, and the ſun is made to ſhine on the juſt and the unjuſt. This is done to ſerve ſeveral wiſe ends of providence; and we ſee there is a time coming, when a ſufficient diſcrimination will be put between them; theſe ſeeming inequalities will be adjuſted, theſe irregular appearances will be ſet right. And would we then be found among the righteous, we muſt converſe with the righteous now; "All our delight muſt be on the "ſaints that are in the earth, and upon ſuch as excel in virtue." Men naturally take a tincture from the company they keep, and are led by inſenſible degrees from converſing to liking, and from liking to imitating. And who then would conſort with thoſe men here, whoſe company will be his greateſt ſhame, his confuſion, his miſery hereafter? Who would not rather aſpire after that holy friendſhip in this world, which will be his higheſt honor and advantage and happineſs in the world to come? (2 Cor. VI. 14.) "For what fellowſhip hath "righteouſneſs

" righteouſneſs with unrighteouſneſs, and what communion hath light " with darkneſs."

5. Since the ſeparate ſouls are in a ſtate of happineſs or miſery, according to their good or ill demeanour in this life, ſhould not this inflame and quicken our deſires of attaining one of theſe ſtates and eſcaping the other? Should not this leſſen our delight and complacence in the good things, and ſupport us under the weight and preſſure of the evil things, which befall us in this world? Should not this extinguiſh our dread of death, and make us willing to be diſſolved and to be with Chriſt? Finally ſhould not this aſſuage and calm that immoderate grief, which moſt of us are apt enough to conceive at the loſs of relations and friends, of perſons near and dear to us? If they die ill, they little deſerve our ſorrow; if they die well, they as little need it. For why ſhould we grieve and mourn for thoſe who are removed into a ſtate of peace and reſt? why ſhould we make ourſelves uneaſy, when they are made for ever happy? Our ſeparation will be only for a little time, and we ſhall ſhortly meet again in a much happier place, never to be parted more.

Laſtly, ſince the ſeparate ſouls are happy or miſerable, but not ſo happy or miſerable as they will be after the reſurrection, we ſee what terrible vengeance God hath in ſtore for them who do evil, what glorious rewards he hath prepared for them who " abound in the work of " the Lord:" and ſhall we not be led by the former to fear and tremble at his juſtice, and by the latter to love and adore his goodneſs? How intolerable muſt be the puniſhment of the wicked, when miſery itſelf will be made ſtill more miſerable? How great muſt be the reward of the righteous, which is not only glory, but (2 Cor. IV. 17.) an " exceeding weight of glory;" not only joy, but (Pſal. XVI. 12.) " fulneſs of joy and pleaſures for evermore?" (Deut. XXXII. 29.) " O that men were wiſe, that they underſtood this, that they " would conſider their latter end!"

DISSERTATION LVIII.

On the general Reſurrection.

AFTER having taken a ſurvey of the ſtate and condition of the ſoul after death, it is natural for us to extend our views farther, and to conſider what is next to follow, the reſurrection of the dead. That men ſhall revive and live again in a future ſtate, wherein they ſhall be rewarded or puniſhed for their good or evil actions in this life, is a principle in ſome meaſure diſcoverable by human reaſon. But that men ſhall riſe again with bodies, in order to appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, and there to receive every one according to the things done in his body, is a truth that can be learned only from divine revelation.

Whatever notions the Gentiles might entertain, the Jews even before our Saviour's time had ſome ideas of a reſurrection. It was indeed no part of the commiſſion given to Moſes to preach and inculcate the doctrin of a future ſtate; his law was founded in temporal ſanctions, in the good and evil things of this life. But in the declenſion of their kingdom the prophets were permitted to draw the veil a little aſide, and to afford them ſome glimpſes of futurity, the better to ſupport and comfort them under the calamities and misfortunes which were then coming upon their country. Elijah had raiſed from the dead the widow's ſon of Zarephath; (1 Kings XVII.) Eliſha reſtored in like manner the Shunamite's ſon to life; (2 Kings IV.) and a dead man happening to be buried in the ſame ſepulchre with Eliſha, (2 Kings XIII. 21.) " when the man was let down, and touched " the bones of Eliſha, he revived and ſtood up on his feet." Which, as the late worthy Dr. Greenwood of Warwick well obſerves in his Paraphraſtical Expoſition of the XVth Chapter of the firſt Epiſtle of St.

Paul

Paul to the Corinthians, was probably the reaſon of three of the Evangeliſts (Matthew Luke and John) recording that our Saviour was laid in a "new tomb," the more effectually to prevent or obviate any ſuſpicion that might ariſe of his coming to life again by touching the bones or relics of any of the former prophets; otherwiſe it is not eaſy to account for the evangeliſts inſiſting ſo particularly upon ſo ſeemingly indifferent a circumſtance, and two of them (Luke and John) expreſly declaring that it was a "new tomb, wherein never man be-"fore was laid."

In theſe inſtances the Jews had ocular demonſtration of men coming to life again; and the prophets often repreſent ſignal deliverances from great calamities under the figure or allegory of a reſurrection from the dead. Iſaiah predicting the reſtoration of the Jews and the deſtruction of their enemies (Chap. XXVI.) ſaith of the former, (ver. 19.) "Thy dead men ſhall live, together with my dead body ſhall they "ariſe: Awake and ſing, ye that dwell in duſt; for thy dew is "as the dew of herbs, and the earth ſhall caſt out the dead:" and of the latter, (ver. 14.) "They are dead, they ſhall not live; they "are deceaſed, they ſhall not riſe; therefore haſt thou viſited and "deſtroyed them, and made all their memory to periſh." Hoſea ſpeaketh in the ſame manner of the children of Iſrael, (XIII. 14.) "I "will ranſom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them "from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy "deſtruction." We have a moſt curious repreſentation of a reſurrection drawn by Ezekiel, (XXXVII. 1, &c.) "There was a valley full "of dry bones, and there was a noiſe, and behold a ſhaking, and the "bones came together, bone to his bone, and the ſinews and the fleſh "came up upon them, and the ſkin covered them above, and the breath "came into them, and they lived, and ſtood up upon their feet, an ex-"ceeding great army." Which viſion is afterwards thus explained to the prophet himſelf, "Son of man, theſe bones are the whole houſe of Iſrael; "behold, they ſay Our bones are dried, and our hope is loſt, "we are cut off for our parts: Therefore propheſy and ſay unto them, "Thus ſaith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves,

" and cauſe you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into " the land of Iſrael; And ye ſhall know that I am the Lord, when " I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out " of your graves; and ſhall put my ſpirit in you, and ye ſhall live, " and I ſhall place you in your own land; then ſhall ye know that I " the Lord have ſpoken it, and performed it, ſaith the Lord." By theſe images the Holy Spirit was pleaſed to foretel the return of the Jews from captivity into their own land, though it is poſſible that the prophets themſelves might not comprehend the whole force and meaning of theſe images, nor ſee to the full end of their predictions. In the ſame manner Job, or rather the author of the book of Job, deſcribes his temporal deliverance and reſtitution, as a reſurrection from death to life again, in that memorable text, (XIX. 25, 26.) " I know " that my Redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the latter day " upon the earth; and though after my ſkin worms deſtroy this body, " yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God." I know not whether the original will ſtrictly bear this tranſlation, but our tranſlators have ſo rendered it, full of their own ideas of the reſurrection. It is very extraordinary that an Arabian of that early age ſhould attain ſuch a degree of light above any of the children of Iſrael; and this alone is a ſtrong argument that the book is not of that antiquity as it is commonly conceived to be. Some great and important truth was without doubt intended to be introduced by that ſolemn and emphatic preface, " Oh " that my words were now written! oh! that they were printed in a " book! That they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the " rock for ever! For I know that my Redeemer liveth," &c. But then on the other hand it may ſurpriſe us, that this great and important truth, which rightly conſidered would have ſilenced all objections, and have put an end to the whole controverſy, is taken no notice of afterwards by any of the interlocutors in the dialogue, or by Elihu who is brought in as mediator, or by God himſelf who cloſeth the diſcourſe. It ſhould ſeem by this, that the writer himſelf did not perfectly comprehend the full meaning and extent of what he had delivered. Of all the prophets Daniel ſpeaketh the moſt plainly and litterally, (XII. 2.)

2.) " Many of them that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall awake, " ſome to everlaſting life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting con- " tempt." The Maccabees were ſo fully perſuaded of this truth, that as the apoſtle ſaith, (Heb. XII. 35.) " they were tortured not ac- " cepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better reſurrection."

In our Saviour's time the notion was grown ſo prevalent, that the principal ſect of the Jews, the Phariſees, acknowleged the reſurrection, and the people generally followed their ſtandard. The Sadducees denied it, but their queſtion propoſed to our Saviour concerning the woman who had married ſucceſſively ſeven huſbands, (Matt. XXII. 28.) " Therefore in the reſurrection whoſe wife ſhall ſhe be of the " ſeven?" plainly implies that the reſurrection was the common belief of the people: and our Saviour's anſwer to them is very applicable to moſt of the inquiries which men make about the reſurrection, (ver. 29.) " Ye do err, not knowing the ſcriptures, nor the power of " God." The belief of the reſurrection was ſo prevalent among the Phariſees, that St. Paul when he was called before the council (Acts XXIII. 6, &c.) very prudently made his advantage of it. For " per- " ceiving that the one part were Sadducees, and the other Phariſees, " he cried out, Men and brethren, I am a Phariſee, the ſon of a " Phariſee; of the hope and reſurrection," that is of the hope of the reſurrection, " of the dead, I am called in queſtion:" and by this ſtratagem he happily eſcaped, for " the ſcribes that were of the Pha- " riſees part aroſe, and ſtrove, ſaying, We find no evil in this man; " but if a ſpirit or an angel hath ſpoken to him, let us not fight againſt " God." Before Felix he profeſſeth (XXIV. 15.) to " have hope " toward God, which they themſelves," his accuſers, " alſo allow, " that there ſhall be a reſurrection of the dead, both of the juſt and " unjuſt." Before Agrippa he declares in like manner (XXVI. 6, 7.) " And now I ſtand, and am judged for the hope of the promiſe made " of God unto our fathers, unto which promiſe our twelves tribes in- " ſtantly ſerving God day and night hope to come." So that he conſidered it as the general belief of the Jews, the Sadducees excepted.

But

But life and immortality were more fully brought to light by the goſpel, and the principal proofs of the reſurrection are to be drawn from the books of the New Teſtament. Our Saviour delivered this doctrin, not in types and figures, but litterally and plainly. He not only gave us aſſurances of our reſurrection, but alſo foretold his own with the circumſtances preceding and following it. He declared himſelf under God the author both of his own and of our reſurrection. Of his own in theſe words; (John II. 19.) "Deſtroy this temple, and "in three days I will raiſe it up:" again, (X. 17, 18.) "Therefore "doth my Father love me, becauſe I lay down my life that I might "take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of "myſelf. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it "again. This commandment have I received of my Father." Of our reſurrection when he ſaid, (XI. 25, 26.) "I am the reſurrection "and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet "ſhall he live: And whoſoever liveth and believeth in me, ſhall ne-"ver die," or rather (according to the original ου μη αποθανη εις τον αιωνα) "ſhall not die for ever." (VI. 40.) "This is the will of him that "ſent me, that every one which ſeeth the Son, and believeth on "him, may have everlaſting life: and I will raiſe him up at the laſt "day." (V. 28, 29.) "The hour is coming, in the which all that "are in the graves ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and ſhall "come forth, they that have done good unto the reſurrection of life, "and they that have done evil unto the reſurrection of damnation." He not only claimed this power over life and death, but exerted it likewiſe in ſeveral inſtances, in the daughter of Jairus (Mark V.) ſoon after ſhe was dead, in the widow of Nain's ſon (Luke VII.) as he was carried on the bier to the grave, in Lazarus (John XI.) after he was buried, and laſtly in himſelf, when at the ſame time (Matt. XXVII. 52.) "many bodies of the ſaints which ſlept aroſe, and came out of "the graves after his reſurrection, and went into the holy city, and "appeared unto many." Theſe are ſo many pledges and earneſts of our reſurrection; and we may the more firmly rely on our Saviour's teſtimony, when we have ſuch authentic facts to ratify and confirm it.

it. Our Saviour's reſurrection is the principal article of the Chriſtian faith, and giveth a ſanction and credit to all the reſt. The apoſtles were choſen for this very purpoſe (Acts I. 22.) to be "witneſſes of "his reſurrection." No matter of fact was ever better atteſted in all the records of time: and from the eſtabliſhment of his reſurrection may be clearly deduced the certainty of ours. They are ſo cloſely connected and woven together, that according to the apoſtle we muſt admit both as true, or reject both as falſe; they muſt ſtand or fall together. (1 Cor. XV. 12, &c.) "If Chriſt be preached that he roſe "from the dead, how ſay ſome among you, that there is no reſurrec-"tion of the dead? But if there is no reſurrection of the dead, then is "Chriſt not riſen. And if Chriſt be not riſen, then is our preaching "vain, and your faith is alſo vain. Yea, and we are found falſe wit-"neſſes of God, becauſe we have teſtified of God that he raiſed up "Chriſt, whom he raiſed not up, if ſo be that the dead riſe not. For "if the dead riſe not, then is not Chriſt raiſed: And if Chriſt be not "raiſed, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your ſins. Then they alſo "which are fallen aſleep in Chriſt, are periſhed."

Plain and undeniable as is the Scripture doctrin of the reſurrection, yet men have contrived wonderfully to perplex it, and ſtrange conceits and paradoxes have been propagated concerning it both in former and in latter times. Some even in the apoſtles days affirmed the reſurrection to be paſt already. I ſuppoſe they underſtood it merely in an allegorical ſenſe, as riſing from the death of ſin to the life of righteouſneſs: but if the doctrin of the reſurrection is not to be underſtood litterally, there is nothing to be underſtood litterally in the whole goſpel. St. Paul warneth his ſon Timothy particularly againſt ſuch men; (2 Tim. II. 17, 18.) "Their word will eat as doth a canker; of whom "is Hymeneus and Philetus, Who concerning the truth have erred, "ſaying that the reſurrection is paſt already, and overthrow the faith "of ſome:" and in another place (1 Tim. I. 20.) he ſaith that "he "had delivered them unto Satan," had excommunicated and inflicted ſome puniſhment upon them, "that they may learn not to blaſpheme."

Some

Some again have denied the poſſibility of any reſurrection. Such there were among the Corinthians, for we find the apoſtle interrogating them, (1 Cor. XV. 12.) "How ſay ſome among you that there is "no reſurrection of the dead?" and in theſe modern as well as in ancient times there have been "Sadducees," (Acts XXIII. 8.) who "ſay "that there is no reſurrection, neither angel, nor ſpirit." But to ſuch men we may very properly put St. Paul's queſtion, (Acts XXVI. 8.) "Why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God "ſhould raiſe the dead?" The author and giver of life can as eaſily reſtore it as he at firſt beſtowed it. Of the two it ſhould ſeem more difficult to be the creator of any thing out of nothing, than to be the reviver and reſtorer out of a præexiſtent ſubſtance. But the thing appears not only poſſible in theory, but likewiſe in practice, and there are facts to confirm it. For we may as well deny the credibility of all hiſtory, we may as well deny every matter of fact that we have not ſeen ourſelves, as deny that there have been men really dead raiſed to life again; and what hath been done in theſe inſtances may be done again. It plainly lieth within the compaſs of almighty power, and it claſheth not with any other of the divine attributes. On the contrary if there be no reſurrection of the dead, it would greatly impeach God's word and promiſe, ſo frequently given, and atteſted by ſo many miracles. As ſure as God is true, there will be a reſurrection of the dead: and (Numb. XXIII. 19) "God is not a man that he ſhould lie, nei-"ther the ſon of man that he ſhould repent; hath he ſaid, and "ſhall he not do it? or hath he ſpoken, and ſhall he not make it "good?"

Others admit the poſſibility of a reſurrection, but would make the juſt only the partakers of it, denying this privilege to the reſt of mankind. It is true that Daniel ſaith (XII. 2.) "Many of them that ſleep "in the duſt of the earth ſhall awake:" but by *many* are here meant *all*, *the many*, *the multitude*, and bad men as well as good are included in the number, as it appears from the following words, "Many of them "that ſleep in the duſt of the earth ſhall awake, ſome to everlaſting "life, and ſome to ſhame and everlaſting contempt." It is true that

St.

St. Paul in the memorable XVth Chapter of his firſt Epiſtle to the Corinthians, which is judiciouſly appointed for the proper leſſon in our funeral ſervice, treating at large of the reſurrection, maketh no mention of the reſurrection of the wicked: but it is not thence to be inferred, that the apoſtle thought there would be no reſurrection of the wicked; it was ſufficient for his purpoſe from the reſurrection of Chriſt to deduce the reſurrection of good Chriſtians, thereby to animate and encourage them to the better diſcharge of their duty; the reſurrection of the wicked would follow of courſe, and it is rather a compliment to the Corinthians, that inſtead of warning them expreſly of the terrors of the Lord, he leaveth it to their own reaſon and conſcience to draw the concluſion. In other places he ſaith expreſly (Acts XXIV. 15.) that "there ſhall be a reſurrection of the "dead, both of the juſt and unjuſt;" and (2 Cor. V. 10.) "we muſt "all appear before the judgment ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may "receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, "whether it be good or bad." There is this difference indeed between the righteous and the wicked, that the wicked ſhall riſe laſt in order. (1 Cor. XV. 22, 23.) "As in Adam all die, even ſo in Chriſt ſhall all "be made alive: But every man in his own order, Chriſt the firſt-"fruits, afterward they that are Chriſt's at his coming:" Or as it is expreſſed elſewhere (1 Theſſ. IV. 16.) "the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe "firſt:" but all ſhall riſe the wicked as well as the righteous, thoſe who have died ſinners as well as thoſe who have died ſaints. Our judge himſelf, who ſhould certainly beſt underſtand the nature of his own proceedings, hath determined the matter beyond all cavil and contradiction. (John V. 28, 29.) "The hour is coming, in the which all "that are in the graves ſhall hear the voice of the Son of God, and "ſhall come forth; they that have done good unto the reſurrection "of life, and they that have done evil unto the reſurrection of dam-"nation."

But the great queſtion of all is, what was agitated in the apoſtles days, and hath been much controverted in later times, (1 Cor. XV. 35.) "How are the dead raiſed up? and with what bodies do they "come?"

" come?" It is more properly two queſtions, firſt " How are the " dead raiſed up?" how can the dead, who are reduced to duſt and aſhes, and ſcattered we know not where, be raiſed up to life again? and ſecondly " With what bodies do they come?" ſhall the dead return to life with the ſame bodies which they had before, or with others? To each of theſe queſtions the apoſtle replies diſtinctly: (ver. 36, 37, 38.) To the firſt, " Thou fool," ſo he denominates the inquirer for calling in queſtion the power of God, and attending no better to the common courſe of nature; " that which thou ſoweſt is not " quickened except it die," the ſeed which thou ſoweſt in the ground muſt firſt corrupt and die, before it can ſpring up again and fructify; death in like manner is the gate and avenue leading to life: To the ſecond, " That which thou ſoweſt, thou ſoweſt not that body that " ſhall be, but God giveth it a body as it hath pleaſed him;" as the corn which ſpringeth up is not the very ſame ſeed that was ſown, ſo thou mayſt infer that the dead ſhall return to life not with the ſame but with other bodies than thoſe which were buried. One would think that St. Paul had here ſaid enough to convince any reaſonable inquirer; but human curioſity will not reſt ſo ſatisfied, and the ſame queſtions are ſtill agitated as if the apoſtle had not returned any anſwers to them. It may be proper therefore more at large to explain and enforce the apoſtle's meaning; and the ſum and ſubſtance of all may be compriſed in theſe few words, that *the ſame perſons ſhall riſe again, but not with the ſame bodies, but with other bodies as it ſhall pleaſe God to give them*; which general doctrin of the reſurrection neceſſarily brancheth itſelf out into ſeveral particulars.

That *the ſame perſons ſhall riſe again* is no more than a principle of common juſtice; for otherwiſe how can the righteous be rewarded, or the wicked be puniſhed, according to their different merits or demerits? Could there be any meaſures of right or wrong, if there was no diſcrimination of perſons, and Peter was to ſuffer for the cruelties of Herod, and Herod was to receive the crown of glory for the faith and conſtancy of Peter? Can there be a greater perverſion of truth and equity, of order and the nature of things, than to acquit the guilty as innocent,

innocent, and condemn the innocent as guilty? Is God in this ſenſe alſo "no reſpecter of perſons?" Or can we without blaſphemy aſcribe ſuch horrid caprice, ſuch monſtrous injuſtice to the greateſt and wiſeſt and beſt of beings? "That be far from thee to do after this manner; (Gen. XVIII. 25.) "that the righteous ſhould be as the wicked, that be far from thee: ſhall not the judge of all the earth do right?"

If you ſhould inquire what conſtitutes the ſame perſon, I would anſwer the ſame living thinking immaterial ſubſtance, conſcious of itſelf to itſelf, that its thoughts words and actions are its own, and not another's. Self-conſciouſneſs is not, as Mr. Locke conceives, the *cauſe*, but is rather the effect of perſonal identity. Perſonal identity conſiſts in the oneneſs, as I may ſay, and ſameneſs of the ſoul, preſerving always the ſame ſelf-conſciouſneſs: but ſelf-conſciouſneſs muſt neceſſarily belong to one individual immaterial ſubſtance; for all matter conſiſting of parts, which being never ſo much divided are ſtill diviſible, there can be no ſuch thing as ſelf-conſciouſneſs, there would be ſo many different conſciouſneſſes as there are different particles of matter. Our ſouls are therefore properly ourſelves, and the ſame perſons are the ſelf-ſame individual conſcious beings. It was excellently ſaid by one of the ancients (what we have had occaſion to cite before) that (1) Every one's mind is every one: The body is as it were the veſſel and receptacle of the mind; whatſoever is done by thy mind, that is done by thee. I feel and know myſelf to be myſelf, and not another. Another can no more be conſcious to my thoughts, than I am to his. I myſelf, this ſame ſelf, this ſame conſcious being, ſhall riſe again, and be accountable for my own actions, and not another for mine, nor I for another's. (Rom. II. 6, &c.) "God "will render to every man according to his deeds; to them, who "by patient continuance in well doing ſeek for glory and honor and "immortality, eternal life; but unto them, that are contentious, and "do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteouſneſs, indignation and "wrath, tribulation and anguiſh upon every ſoul of man that doeth "evil, but glory honor and peace to every man that worketh good."

(1) Animus cujuſque is eſt quiſque. Corpus | animo tuo quicquid agitur, id agitur a te. Cic. quaſi vas eſt aut aliquod animi receptaculum; ab | Tuſc. Diſp. I. 22.

Juſtice therefore requires, that the ſame perſons ſhould riſe again, *but not with the ſame bodies.* For our bodies are not ourſelves. As the ſame ancient ſaid, (2) Neither are we bodies, nor do I ſpeaking this ſpeak it to thy body. However you maim and mutilate the body, cut off limb after limb, yet ſelf-conſcioufneſs ſtill remains; however the body may change and vary, yet your ſoul, your ſelf ſtill continues the ſame. Our bodies without our ſouls are nothing better than dead ſenſeleſs matter; and conſidered in themſelves, as they are not capable of virtue or vice, ſo neither are they ſuſceptible of rewards or liable to puniſhments. Of what uſe and ſignificance therefore are theſe bodies to the purpoſes of the reſurrection? What neceſſity can there be for riſing again with the ſame bodies? or how is diſtributive juſtice concerned one way or the other? All the inſtances indeed which we have upon record of a reſurrection, the three raiſed by the prophets in the Old Teſtament, the widow of Zarephath's ſon, the Shunamite's ſon, and the dead man who touched the bones of Eliſha; the three raiſed by our Saviour in the goſpels, the daughter of Jairus, the widow of Nain's ſon, and Lazarus; thoſe alſo who roſe at our Saviour's reſurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many; thoſe alſo who were raiſed by the apoſtles, Tabitha by Peter, and Eutychus by Paul: All theſe roſe again with the ſame bodies, becauſe they were but newly deceaſed, and with other bodies could not well have been known by their friends and relations. Our bleſſed Saviour himſelf roſe alſo with the ſame body, the better to convince his diſciples of the truth and reality of his reſurrection; and he ſhowed them the prints of the nails in his hands and in his feet, and the wound in his ſide. All theſe, except our Saviour, died again, in order to riſe again in the reſurrection at the laſt day, when there will not be the like reaſon for reſuming the ſame bodies. Our Saviour too retained the ſame body as long as he continued upon earth; but upon his aſcenſion into heaven, it became "a glorious body," whereof he had before given a ſpecimen in his transfiguration. Our bodies are appendages and inſtruments of this life only; they are altogether unfit and improper for the next.

(2) Neque nos corpora ſumus; neque ego tibi dicens hoc corpori tuo dico. Cic. ibid.

Αναςασις,

Αναϛασις, the word conſtantly uſed throughout the New Teſtament for the *reſurrection*, ſignifies a riſing again, a life after death, another ſtate of the ſame perſon after the preſent; but never once that I know of ſignifies, or even implies the reſurrection of the ſame body. If it had ſignified the reſurrection of the ſame body, our Saviour's argument in that memorable text, (Matt. XXII. 31, 32.) "But as touch-"ing the reſurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was "ſpoken unto you by God, ſaying, I am the God of Abraham, and "the God of Iſaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of "the dead, but of the living:" If "the reſurrection of the dead" had ſignified the reſurrection of the ſame body, this argument I ſay would be deficient, which otherwiſe is a very good one. For Abraham Iſaac and Jacob ſtill living are no proofs or inſtances of the reſurrection of the ſame body, but afford an undeniable argument for the immortality of the ſoul and another life after this. This argument was urged againſt the Sadducees, "who ſay that there is no reſurrec-"tion;" but the Sadducees by ſaying that there is no reſurrection did not mean only to deny the reſurrection of the body; they maintained that there was no future ſtate, no immaterial immortal ſubſtance, neither angel nor ſpirit. Such men could not be more effectually refuted than by proving to them, that their forefathers Abraham Iſaac and Jacob were not dead but ſtill living. A plain and evident proof of the future exiſtence of the ſame perſons, but no proof at all of the reſurrection of the ſame body.

This negative argument may be carried farther. The ſcripture no where propoſeth the reſurrection of the ſame body as an article of faith, nor even mentions it unleſs in the way of metaphor and figure. When Iſaiah ſaid (XXVI. 19.) "Thy dead men ſhall live, together with my "dead body ſhall they ariſe," he ſpake figuratively of the reſtoration and return of the Jews from captivity, which he thought an event in a manner as wonderful as a dead body coming to life again. When Job ſaid (XIX. 26.) "In my fleſh I ſhall ſee God," it is to be underſtood of his reſtoration to his temporal felicity, to the grace and favor of God even in this life; for ſtrictly ſpeaking, "in his fleſh" it

was

was impoſſible for him to ſee God. He is (1 Tim. I. 17.) " the in-
" viſible God" (VI. 16.) " whom no man hath ſeen, nor can ſee:"
and (1 Cor. XV. 50.) " fleſh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom
" of God." In the New Teſtament though the doctrin of the gene-
ral reſurrection is ſo much inſiſted upon, and ſuch frequent mention is
made of the reſurrection of *the dead*, yet we no where read of the reſur-
rection of *the ſame body*. All the texts, which are uſually alleged to
this purpoſe, fall ſhort of proving it. Our Saviour ſaith (John V. 28,
29.) " All that are in the graves ſhall hear his voice, and come forth;"
and what are in the graves but the dead bodies? But if this is any proof
of the reſurrection of the body, it proveth too much, that the
dead bodies " can hear and come forth" without their ſouls, for I pre-
ſume it will hardly be ſaid that the ſouls are in the graves too. It will
alſo prove, that the very ſame bodies, whether ſwoln with dropſies or
waſted by conſumptions, ſhall " come forth" in the ſame form and
manner as they were laid in their graves. " All that are in the graves"
is nothing more than a periphraſis for " the dead, they who have done
" good, and they who have done evil," which cannot poſſibly be ap-
plied to dead bodies. " All they that are in the graves, ſhall hear
" his voice and come forth, they that have done good unto the reſur-
" rection of life, and they that have done evil unto the reſurrection
" of condemnation." In like manner it is ſaid (Rev. XX. 13.) " The
" ſea gâve up the dead which were in it:" but it is not ſaid that the
ſea gave up *the dead bodies*, which perhaps were ſwallowed whole by
the greater, or devoured piece-meal by the leſſer ſea-monſters; but
only that it gave up " the dead," to denote the univerſality of the re-
ſurrection, that all ſhall riſe again, as well thoſe who were drowned
at ſea as thoſe who were buried at land. " The ſea gave up the dead
" which were in it, and death and hell," or the grave as it is in the
margin of our bibles, " delivered up the dead which were in them;
" and they were judged every man according to their works." St.
Paul ſaith (Rom. VIII. 11.) " He that raiſed up Chriſt from the dead,
" ſhall alſo quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in
" you:" but this hath no relation to the reſurrection; it relates only

to

to thoſe men who were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, and are now quickened to a new life of righteouſneſs by the Spirit of God dwelling in them: as appears evidently from the following inference, (ver. 12, 13.) "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the fleſh, to live "after the fleſh; for if ye live after the fleſh, ye ſhall die; but if ye "through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live:" and the ſame ſentiment is expreſſed elſewhere by the ſame apoſtle, (Eph. II. 4, 5, 6.) "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love "wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in ſins, hath "quickened us together with Chriſt (by grace ye are ſaved) and hath "raiſed us up together, and made us ſit together in heavenly places "in Chriſt Jeſus." If the reſurrection of the ſame body had ever been intended, there is a paſſage where St. Paul could hardly have avoided the mention of it. (1 Cor. VI. 13, 14.) He is ſpeaking againſt the defilement of the body, our bodies being the members of Chriſt and temples of the holy Ghoſt. "Now the body is not for fornica-"tion, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body: And God "hath both raiſed up the Lord, and will alſo," one would naturally expect it to follow, "raiſe up the body by his own power," but *the body* is purpoſely omitted, and it is ſaid, "raiſe up us," "us" not "the body, by his own power." St. Paul is, I think, the only one who hath treated purpoſely and at large of the reſurrection-body; and he is ſo far from defining it to be the ſame numerical body, that he deſcribes it as of a totally different form and order.

If thoſe who contend for the reſurrection of the ſame body, would conſider a little what it is that conſtitutes the ſame body, they would be convinced of the difficulty or rather the impoſſibility of that identical body ever riſing again. By the ſame body I underſtand a body of the ſame numerical parts, and cannot conceive otherwiſe how it can be the ſame body; for all body conſiſts of parts, and the ſame parts conſtitute the ſame body, different parts make a different body. Now the human body is never in a permanent ſtate, is always in a continual flux, changing almoſt every moment, ſtanding in need of perpetual evacuations and reparations, gaining ſome particles of matter and loſing

loſing others. It is computed (3) that forty ounces at leaſt are ordinarily carried off from the body in a day by inſenſible perſpiration alone, and all other diſcharges and evacuations taken into the account muſt ſwell the number and produce ſtill more alterations; ſo that the body is never for any time exactly the ſame, but at the different periods of life is a very different body. The child in arms, the boy at play, the tall ſtripling youth, the robuſt vigorous man, the man of riper years and underſtanding, the decripit old man bowed down and ſinking under the weight of age and infirmities, through all theſe ſtages is the *ſame perſon* as being indued with the ſame ſelf-conſciouſneſs, but he can hardly be ſaid with propriety to be the *ſame man*, and much leſs to have the *ſame body*, no more than the old ſhip often repaired and refitted, with ſcarce a ſingle piece of the firſt timber remaining, can truly be ſaid to be the ſame ſhip, though called ſtill by the ſame name. Bu it is thought juſt and equitable that the body, which was the partaker and inſtrument of a man's good or evil actions, ſhould partake alſo with him in his rewards or puniſhments. But with which of all his different bodies muſt he then ariſe, with that which he had at twenty, or forty, or ſixty, or with that which was laid in the grave at fourſcore? Is it fitting that the body of one age ſhould undergo the puniſhment due to the body of another age, that the body wherein the ſin was not committed ſhould ſuffer, and that the body wherein the ſin was committed ſhould eſcape? Or to remedy and avoid this inconvenience, muſt he riſe with all his bodies as good or evil deeds were done in all, and ſo become an aggregate of all the different maſſes and particles of matter, whereof his body had at any time been compoſed? The ſuppoſition is aſhamed of itſelf: And why ſuch ſollicitude for the execution of juſtice on the body, when the body without the ſoul the principle of life is neither capable of good or evil, and hath no more ſenſe or feeling than a ſtock or ſtone? Juſtice, as I ſaid before, requires that the *ſame perſon* ſhould ariſe, but not with the *ſame body*, the body being equally inſenſible to juſtice or injuſtice, to reward or puniſhment.

(3) See Sanctorius and Chambers's Dict. *Perſpiration.*

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The two moſt probable ſolutions which I have ſeen of the difficulties attending the reſurrection of the body are one by Dr. Clarke in his *Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion*, and the other by Mr. Broughton of Briſtol in his book intitled *A Proſpect of Futurity*, a book very well worthy of the peruſal of every ſerious Chriſtian. Dr. Clarke ſuppoſes (4), that there is an original ſtamen or ſeminal principle which is in effect the entire body, that all the reſt is extraneous matter, that this in all changes and revolutions continues unchanged, and is the root or ſeed which by degrees expands and unfolds itſelf into the reſurrection-body. But if there be ſuch an original ſtamen or ſeminal principle, which is very much to be queſtioned and may full as well be denied as affirmed, yet this being ſtill but matter muſt be ſubject to the ſame changes and viciſſitudes, to the ſame diſſolution and diſperſion as all other matter; it can be preſerved entire only by miracle; and if preſerved, yet I cannot ſee how the body can poſſibly be the ſame, when the parts are ſo different. Dr. Clarke ſays indeed, that there is no neceſſity for the reſtitution of the ſame parts to conſtitute the ſame body. But all body is compoſed of parts, and cannot ſubſiſt without parts; and if the parts can be changed, and the body yet remain the ſame, there is an utter end of all our notions of identity and diverſity. It would ſurely be much more rational to ſay, that there is no neceſſity for the reſtitution of the ſame body, than that the ſame body can be reſtored without the reſtitution of the ſame parts, the one ſeeming altogether impoſſible without the other. Mr. Broughton is of opinion (5), that after all the changes undergone by the dead body, there will ſtill ſome remainder or reſidue be left behind, a ſpecial providence interpoſing to prevent its being quite diſſipated and entirely loſt; that a body formed out of this remainder or reſidue, without the admixture of any foreign matter, is in a juſtifiable ſenſe the ſame body; that it is in the power of God, out of a very ſmall remainder of the dead body, to form, by dilatation expanſion or rarefaction, a body of whatever ſize and dimenſions he pleaſeth. But allowing (what cannot be readily allowed) that there may be ſuch a ſpecial providence watching over ſuch an unwor-

(4) Clarke's Works, Fol. Vol. II. p. 690, &c. (5) Diſſert. II. p. 194, &c.

thy ſubject as a little parcel or particle of dead body; yet a dead body ſo dilated expanded or rarefied is no longer the ſame body. Mr. Broughton himſelf acknowleges, that it is *alterum et idem*, *another yet the ſame*, which is more ingenious than philoſophical. It is in truth and reality no more the ſame than great and little, denſe and rare, light and heavy, are the ſame, or than the four elements as they are called, fire air earth and water, are the ſame, which are all but matter differently modified. So different a modification produceth a totally different body. After all it cannot be denied that both theſe hypotheſes are poſſible, and conſequently may be true: but if either of them contains a true account of the reſurrection of the body, yet neither of them amounts to a proof of the reſurrection of the ſame body. And indeed what occaſion is there for ſo many debates and controverſies, ſo many ſolutions and explications of the difficulties attending the reſurrection of the ſame body, when the ſcripture propoſeth no ſuch article to our belief. Men often imagin that they ſee in ſcripture what they really do not, ſtart difficulties where there are none, and then are very ingenious to perplex and puzzle themſelves and others in explaining their own imaginations.

So far is the ſcripture from aſſerting the reſurrection of the ſame body, that on the contrary plain intimations are given that the body ſhall not be the ſame. Nothing can be clearer and ſtronger to this purpoſe than the declaration of St. Paul, (1 Cor. XV. 37.) "Thou ſoweſt "not that body that ſhall be." The body of this life, the body which dies and is buried, is not that body which ſhall riſe again; no more than the corn, which groweth up to the increaſe of thirty fold or ſixty fold or an hundred fold, is that identical ſeed which was ſown. It may be ſaid indeed to be of the ſame kind, but ſtill that is not the ſame individual; and no compariſons are deſigned to quadrate exactly, and to hold alike good in all reſpects. There will be a change, for as St. Paul afterwards informs us, (ver. 51, 52.) "We ſhall not all "ſleep," we ſhall not all die, "but we ſhall all be changed, in a "moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the ſound of the laſt trum-"pet:" And if thoſe who ſhall be found alive at the coming of Chriſt

Chriſt ſhall be changed, we may be certain that the dead will not riſe again with the ſame bodies. We cannot ſuppoſe ſo great a miracle to be wrought as the reſurrection of the ſame bodies for no greater end or purpoſe than to be changed immediately. No, " the dead" (οἱ νεκροι not τα ζωμαλα, the dead not the dead bodies) " ſhall be raiſed " incorruptible, and we ſhall" in like manner " be changed," and, as the apoſtle ſaith elſewhere, (1 Theſſ. IV. 17.) " we which are alive " and remain ſhall be caught up together with them in the clouds to " meet the Lord in the air, and ſo ſhall we ever be with the Lord." The reaſon of this great change is aſſigned in the foregoing words, (ver. 50.) " Now this I ſay, brethren, that fleſh and blood cannot " inherit the kingdom of God." Such frail periſhable ſubſtances, ſuch groſs corrupt humors, as compoſe our preſent bodies, are by no means fit to enter into the regions of everlaſting life and holineſs: We muſt in a manner become new men, new creatures, before we can be qualified to be proper gueſts and inhabitants of heaven. For " fleſh " and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth cor- " ruption inherit incorruption." This article therefore is not ſo juſtly expreſſed in what is called the Apoſtles, as it is in the Nicene or Conſtantinopolitan Creed. In the Apoſtles Creed it is " the reſurrection " of the body," in the Nicene or Conſtantinopolitan Creed it is " the " reſurrection of the dead," which is more ſcriptural. The reſurrection of " the body" was not inſerted into the Apoſtles Creed till ſome years (6) after the compoſition of the Nicene Creed. In the Creed of Aquileia and ſome others it is ſtill worſe " the reſurrection of the " fleſh," which is directly contrary to the authority and even the expreſs words of the apoſtle, " fleſh and blood cannot inherit the king- " dom of God." It is earneſtly to be wiſhed, that all creeds were framed as much as may be convenient in the words, or at leaſt perfectly agreeable to the ſenſe of ſcripture.

If then it hath been proved, as to my thinking it hath moſt evidently been proved, that the dead will not riſe with the ſame bodies; it fol-

(6) See Dr. Sykes's Inquiry when the Reſurrection of the Body or Fleſh was firſt inſerted into the public Creeds. 1757.

lows of courſe that they will riſe *with other bodies as it ſhall pleaſe God to give them*, which will farther illuſtrate and demonſtrate the difference between the two bodies of this life and of that which is to come. " Thou ſoweſt not that body that ſhall be, but God giveth " it a body as it hath pleaſed him." The nature and properties of this body we cannot poſſibly diſcover by natural inquiries; reaſon and philoſophy are here quite at a ſtand; all our knowlege muſt be derived or collected from ſcripture; and the texts are ſo plain and obvious that they want little comment or explanation. We have ſeen already that this body cannot conſiſt of fleſh and blood, for " fleſh and blood can- " not inherit the kingdom of God;" and conſequently it muſt be totally of a different frame and ſtructure, without ſuch ſkin and bones for the covering and ſupport of the fleſh, without ſuch veins and arteries for the circulation of the blood. It will not ſtand in need of the like food and nouriſhment, nor conſequently require the like organs and inſtruments of digeſtion. (1 Cor. VI. 13.) " Meats for the belly, " and the belly for meats; but God will deſtroy both it and them." Moreover it will not be fitted, as there will not be then any occaſion, for the propagation and continuation of the ſpecies. (Luke XX. 34, 35, 36.) " The children of this world marry and are given in mar- " riage: But they which ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that " world, and the reſurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are " given in marriage: Neither can they die any more, for they are " equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the chil- " dren of the reſurrection." We ſhall therefore be raiſed and improved into an angelical nature and conſtitution, our body as well as our ſpirit reſembling thoſe of angels. St. Paul hath given ſome farther diſtinctive characters of the difference or rather the contrariety of the two bodies to each other. (1 Cor. XV. 42.) " It is ſown in cor- " ruption; it is raiſed in incorruption." In this life the body hath within itſelf the ſeeds of corruption, is continually tending to decay and diſſolution, liable to diſeaſes, obnoxious to death: in the next it will be freed from all periſhing materials, will be made incorruptible and immortal, and there will be no more ſickneſs, no more pain, no more

more death. (ver. 43.) " It is ſown in diſhonor, it is raiſed in glory." In this life it is no better than a vile contemptible carcaſs, living it is often clouded and oppreſſed, and dead it ſoon becomes a nuiſance and offenſe to thoſe about us: in the next it will be no more debaſed and darkened by ſinful exceſſes, will be ſplendid and illuſtrious in appearance as well as in action, and, to make uſe of the ſcripture compariſons employed upon this ſame ſubject, (Dan. XII. 3. Matt. XIII. 43.) " ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, as the ſtars for ever " and ever, as the ſun in the kingdom of the Father." (ver. ibid.) " It is ſown in weakneſs; it is raiſed in power." In this life it is ſubject to many frailties and infirmities, is ſlow to act and cannot act long together without wearineſs and faintneſs, and ſometimes is ſo debilitated and enfeebled as to be hardly able to move and help itſelf: in the next it will have its powers and faculties greatly inlarged, will know no fatigue and laſſitude no lazineſs and liſtleſneſs, but be ſtrong and vigorous lively and active as the flame. (ver. 44.) " It is ſown a " natural body; it is raiſed a ſpiritual body." In this life it is a natural or animal body, ſuſtained by animal food, and fitted for animal purpoſes ſuitable to our ſtate and condition upon earth: in the next it will be refined and ſpiritualized, and become a more equal companion, a more friendly aſſociate of the ſoul, ſo that inſtead of lagging behind, and being a burden and incumbrance, it will almoſt keep even pace with her, and be ready upon all occaſions to join and aſſiſt her in her operations. (ver. 40, 47, 49.) " There are alſo celeſtial " bodies, and bodies terreſtrial: The firſt man is of the earth, earthy; " the ſecond man is the Lord from heaven: And as we have borne the " image of the earthy, we ſhall alſo bear the image of the heavenly." In this life the body is compounded of earthy particles, is made of duſt, and unto duſt ſhall return: in the next it will be formed of celeſtial matter, purer than air, lighter than æther, ſuch as we have neither ſeen or known, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive. The laſt character of the reſurrection-body is that it ſhall reſemble Chriſt's glorious body. (Philip. III. 20, 21.) " For our converſation" (or rather *our citizenſhip*) " is in heaven, from whence alſo we look for

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" the Saviour the Lord Jeſus Chriſt; Who ſhall change our vile body, " that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body, according to " the working, whereby he is able even to ſubdue all things unto " himſelf." As it was before obſerved, he gave a ſpecimen of this honor and glory to his three diſciples at his transfiguration, (Matt. XVII. 2.) when " his face did ſhine as the ſun, and his raiment was " white as the light." In this heavenly form he appeared to the firſt martyr St. Stephen in his laſt agonies, (Acts VII. 55.) who " being full " of the holy Ghoſt, looked up ſtedfaſtly into heaven, and ſaw the " glory of God, and Jeſus ſtanding on the right hand of God." In this heavenly form he appeared to St. Paul at his converſion, (Acts XXVI. 13.) when " at midday he ſaw in the way a light from hea- " ven, above the brightneſs of the ſun, ſhining round about him and " them who journeyed with them." In this ſame form alſo he appeared to St. John in the ile of Patmos, (Rev. I. 14, 15, 16.) with " his eyes as a flame of fire, and his feet like unto fine braſs, as if they " burned in a furnace, and his countenance as the ſun ſhining in his " ſtrength:" And in like manner at the laſt great day (Matt. XXV. 31.) " he ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him " (2 Theſſ. I. 8.) in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know " not God, and obey not the goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt." No doubt I think can be made, that he aſſumed this glorious body upon his aſcenſion into heaven. We may ſuppoſe alſo, that Enoch and Elijah were changed in like manner, when they were tranſlated and rapt up into heaven: as we well know and are aſſured, that our change will be wrought at the coming of Chriſt, " in a moment, in the twinkling " of an eye, and we ſhall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord " in the air."

But all that hath been ſaid hitherto relates only to the reſurrection of the righteous, and probably you may aſk, " How are the wicked " raiſed up, and with what body do they come?" The ſcripture ſaith in the general, (Acts XXIV. 15.) that " there will be a reſurrection " both of the juſt and unjuſt," and (John V. 28, 29.) that " all that " are in the graves ſhall come forth, they that have done good unto the " reſurrection

" reſurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the reſurrection " of damnation :" but it enters into no particulars of the reſurrection of the wicked, nor mentions at all the nature and properties of their bodies. But from the ſtate of the righteous we may by analogy infer what will be the condition of the wicked, that their bodies will in ſome reſpects be the ſame, in others be very different. They will be raiſed without doubt with " an incorruptible" and " immortal," with " a pow- " erful" and " ſpiritual body," which will render them more capable of bearing, and more ſenſible of pain and puniſhment: but we cannot ſuppoſe that they will be raiſed " in glory," or that their " body will " be faſhioned like unto Chriſt's glorious body." Satan is ſaid (2 Cor. XI. 14.) to be " transformed into an angel of light," which ſufficiently implies that he is in himſelf *an angel of darkneſs:* And at the general reſurrection, as the righteous will be made " equal unto the " angels," and their " body be faſhioned like unto Chriſt's glorious " body," ſo the wicked on the reverſe will reſemble the devil and his angels. The ſcripture chooſeth to ſet before us the promiſes rather than the terrors of the Lord, to animate our hopes rather than alarm our fears, to draw us with the cords of love rather than drive us with the whips of ſcorpions, to treat us as men of liberal minds rather than having the temper of ſlaves: And may God give us his grace, that we may always retain a lively and grateful ſenſe of this his goodneſs to us, and be careful to live the life of the righteous here, that we may be partakers with them in their glory hereafter, when (Dan. XII. 3.) " they that be wiſe ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, and " they that turn many to righteouſneſs as the ſtars for ever and ever!"

There cannot be a better cloſe to this diſcourſe than St. Paul's concluſion of the ſame ſubject. (1 Cor. XV. 58.) " Therefore, my be- " loved brethren, be ye ſtedfaſt, unmoveable, always abounding in " the work of the Lord, foraſmuch as ye know that your labor is not " in vain in the Lord."

DIS-

DISSERTATION LIX.

On the general Judgment.

IMMEDIATELY after the general reſurrection ſucceeds the general judgment. That mankind ſhall finally be judged for all their actions in this life, in order to be rewarded or puniſhed in a future ſtate, is a principle of natural reaſon as well as of divine revelation, and is aſſerted in the writings of heathen philoſophers though not ſo fully and clearly as in the books of holy ſcripture. And indeed it is not only proper but expedient, not only expedient but neceſſary, that there ſhould be ſome ſuch judgment. For as God is infinitely holy and juſt and good himſelf, he cannot but approve holineſs and juſtice and goodneſs in others, and diſapprove the contrary qualifications; and conſequently he cannot but reward virtue and puniſh vice, to ſhow his approbation of the one his diſapprobation of the other. But this is not always done in the preſent ſcene of things; virtue is ſometimes oppreſſed, and vice ſometimes triumphant; "there are wicked men "(Eccleſ. VIII. 14.) unto whom it happeneth according to the work "of the righteous, and there are righteous men unto whom it hap-"peneth according to the work of the wicked:" And therefore there muſt neceſſarily be ſome future judgment to rectify the irregularities of this preſent ſtate, to vindicate the honor of God's laws and the juſtice of his government, and to render unto every man "according to "that he hath done in the body whether it be good or bad." To this truth our very conſciences alſo bear witneſs, our hearts continually accuſing us or elſe excuſing us for what we do: and the judgment of conſcience is the preſage and earneſt of the judgment of God.

Thus much in general of a future judgment we learn both from reaſon and revelation; and they reciprocally confirm and illuſtrate each other.

other. But the concluſions of reaſon are confuſed and imperfect in compariſon, the declarations of revelation are more clear and explicit. Our bleſſed Saviour himſelf hath given us, beſides ſeveral parables intimating the ſame thing, a deſcription of the laſt judgment in the XXVth Chapter of St. Matthew, when " before him ſhall be gather-" ed all nations." St. Paul informs the Athenians (Acts XVII. 30, 31.) that " the times of ignorance God winked at, but now command-" eth all men every where to repent; becauſe he hath appointed a " day, in the which he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, by that " man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given aſſurance unto " all men, in that he hath raiſed him from the dead." The ſame apoſtle delivers the ſame truth to the Romans, (Rom. XIV. 10, 11, 12.) " We ſhall all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt; for it " is written, As I live ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow to me, " and every tongue ſhall confeſs to God: So then every one of us " ſhall give account of himſelf to God." He likewiſe aſſures the Corinthians, (2 Cor. V. 10.) " We muſt all appear before the judgment-" ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his " body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Where as the (1) learned and ingenious Mr. Broughton of Briſtol hath juſtly noted, *the words receive the things done in the body* are hardly ſenſe. We may receive *for the things done in the body*, or a *recompenſe of the things done in the body*, but not *the things themſelves*. Wherefore inſtead of τα δια τε σωματος ſome copies have τα ιδια τε σωματος, *propria corporis*, the things *proper* or *due* to the body. Curcellæus propoſes a various reading, ἁ δια τε σωματος επραξεν *what things he hath done in the body*. Both which readings improve the ſenſe of the paſſage. Mr. Broughton ſuppoſes a diſlocation of the words, and would read προς ἁ επραξεν δια τε σωματος, " that every one may receive according to the " things he hath done in the body, either good or evil;" referring the *good* or *evil*, not to *the things done in the body*, but to the *recompenſe* of the doer. Enoch's prediction of the approaching deluge is expreſſed in ſuch a manner as to be made equally applicable to the general judg-

(1) Broughton's Proſpect of Futurity, p. 244.

ment, (Jude 14, 15.) " Behold the Lord cometh with ten thouſands " of his ſaints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that " are ungodly among them, of all their ungodly deeds which they have " ungodly committed, and of all their hard ſpeeches, which ungodly " ſinners have ſpoken againſt him." St. John's viſion of the laſt judgment is very pictureſque and ſtriking, (Rev. XX. 11, 12.) " And " I ſaw a great white throne, and him that ſat on it, from whoſe face " the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place " for them: And I ſaw the dead ſmall and great ſtand before God, " and the books were opened; and another book was opened which " is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of thoſe things " which were written in the books, according to their works."

Beſides theſe general deſcriptions, there are ſeveral particulars, which we have only from revelation, and which, though reaſon could not diſcover them, yet when they are diſcovered, are perfectly agreeable to reaſon. And theſe relate to the *perſon* who is to judge the world, to the *ſolemnity* of the judgment, and to the *time* of the judgment.

I. As to the *perſon* who is to judge the world, the heathens had ſome imperfect notions of there being judges in the infernal regions, and theſe judges they ſuppoſed to have been heroes and lawgivers upon earth, as Minos, Æacus and Rhadamanthus. But improved reaſon teacheth us that God will judge the world, and revelation moreover informs that God will judge the world by " Chriſt Jeſus." It is God who judgeth, but Jeſus Chriſt is the perſon by whom he judgeth. " God ſhall judge the ſecrets of men by Jeſus Chriſt," as St. Paul expreſſeth it; (Rom. II. 16.) and again (Acts XVII. 31.) " He will judge the world in righteouſneſs by that man whom he hath " ordained, whereof he hath given aſſurance unto all men in that he " hath raiſed him from the dead:" and abundance of other texts might eaſily be produced to the ſame purpoſe. Now the reaſons of this œconomy, of this deſignation of Jeſus to be the judge of the world, as far as we can apprehend, ſeem to be ſome ſuch as theſe.

It ſeemeth reaſonable to think, that he who created the world, ſhould alſo judge the ſame. (John I. 3.) " All things were made by " him, and without him was not any thing made that was made:" and no perſon therefore ſo proper as he to judge of his own creation.

It was alſo deſigned for the honor of Jeſus and the reward of his ſufferings, according to the account which we have of this matter in ſome places of ſcripture. Our Saviour himſelf ſaith in the goſpel of St. John (V. 22, 23.) " The Father judgeth no man, but hath com- " mitted all judgment unto the Son, that all men ſhould honor the " Son even as they honor the Father." St. Paul in his Epiſtle to the Philippians (II. 8, &c.) informs us, that Jeſus " humbled himſelf, " and became obedient to death, even the death of the croſs; where- " fore God alſo hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above " every name, that at the name of Jeſus every knee ſhould bow, and " that every tongue ſhould confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the " glory of God the Father." And that theſe phraſes of " every knee's " bowing" and " every tongue's confeſſing" relate particularly to Chriſt's being appointed judge of the world, appears from a parallel place in another of St. Paul's epiſtles; (Rom. XIV. 10, &c.) " We " ſhall all ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt; For it is written, " As I live ſaith the Lord, every knee ſhall bow to me, and every " tongue ſhall confeſs to God: So then every one of us ſhall give ac- " count of himſelf to God." There ſeemeth alſo to be ſome ſort of analogy between his ſufferings and the reward of his ſufferings, that He who came firſt in weakneſs, ſhould come again in power; that He who condeſcended to become a man to give us a law, ſhould be commiſſioned to try us how we have obſerved that law; that He who was deſpiſed and rejected by wicked men, ſhould be attended by myriads of holy angels; that He who in his humiliation was judged by men, ſhould come in his glory to judge men; that He who " appeared (Heb. IX. 26, 28.) once in the end of the world to put away ſin by " the ſacrifice of himſelf" ſhould " unto them that look for him, " appear the ſecond time without ſin unto ſalvation."

Again, this honor might be conferred on Jeſus, becauſe being both God and man he is in his human nature viſible. This ſeemeth to be ſufficiently implied in that ſaying of our Saviour, (John V. 27.) "The "Father hath given him authority to execute judgment alſo, becauſe "he is the ſon of man." We learn from revelation that the judgment is to be adminiſtred in a viſible manner, and men are to be raiſed and united to bodies in order to make their viſible appearance there. Now it ſeemeth reaſonable to think that the judge ſhould be viſible as well as other ſolemnities of the judgment, the perſon who is to paſs ſentence as well as thoſe upon whom ſentence is to be paſſed. But "God no man hath ſeen nor can ſee," at leaſt "without holineſs "no man can ſee him:" and at the general judgment will be aſſembled all ſorts good and bad together. And therefore Jeſus Chriſt is properly choſen for this great work, that while he judgeth as God, he may be viſible as man.

Moreover this œconomy ſerveth wonderfully to diſplay the goodneſs of God, and leaveth man entirely without excuſe. For how could God manifeſt his gracious intentions towards us more, than by appointing for our judge one of the ſame nature with ourſelves, (Heb. IV. 15.) one who was "tempted in all points like as we are tempted" ſin only excepted, (V. 2.) one who can "have compaſſion on the ig-"norant, and on them that are out of the way, for that he himſelf alſo "was compaſſed with infirmity?" And what can men plead in their excuſe, or to whom can we deſire to appeal, if our Saviour himſelf cannot ſave us? if he who ſuffered and died to redeem us cannot pardon us, who elſe will be more merciful than he to pardon? if he who is our advocate and intercedes for us condemns us, who elſe, can we expect, will acquit us, and ſtand between us and deſtruction? What a comfort muſt it be to good men to apply the words of Job (XIX. 25, 26.) "I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he ſhall ſtand at the "latter day upon the earth; and though after my ſkin worms deſtroy "this body, yet in my fleſh ſhall I ſee God?" What a terror muſt it be to wicked men to conſider, that they ſhall be judged at laſt by the Lord whom they have ſo often denied; that they ſhall look upon him whom

whom they have " pierced," pierced by their ſins, and " crucified" to themſelves " afreſh" and " put to an open ſhame;" that they ſhall " ſay to the mountains and rocks fall on us and hide us from " the face of him that ſitteth on the throne and from the wrath of the " lamb:" (Rev. VI. 16.) " from the wrath of the lamb," a remarkable expreſſion to intimate how terrible muſt be the effects of deſpiſed mercy and meekneſs provoked.

Upon the whole who is ſo proper to judge between God and man as he who is God and man; and partaking of the nature of both, muſt therefore be a proper judge between both? In this diſpenſation are manifeſted the greateſt love and the greateſt juſtice: (Pſal. LXXXV. 10.) " Mercy and truth are met together, righteouſneſs and peace " have kiſſed each other." We may well ſay in the words of the hymn called *Te Deum*, " We believe that thou ſhalt come to be our " judge; We therefore pray thee help thy ſervants, whom thou haſt " redeemed with thy precious blood; Make them to be numbered " with thy ſaints in glory everlaſting."

II. As to the *ſolemnity* of the judgment, reaſon can only conclude in the general that it muſt needs be a great and ſolemn proceſs, but revelation hath informed us of ſeveral particulars. From hence we learn, that Chriſt will come in his glory, and the holy angels with him. We have a prophecy as early as Enoch the ſeventh from Adam (Jude 14, 15.) " Behold the Lord cometh with ten thouſands of his ſaints to ex- " ecute judgment upon all." And ſo likewiſe our Saviour himſelf aſſures us in the goſpel, (Matt. XXV. 31.) " the Son of man ſhall come " in his glory, and all the holy angels with him."

That the trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead of all paſt ages ſhall be raiſed, and they who ſhall be found then living ſhall be changed, and be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; as St. Paul informs us in his firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians, (XV. 51, 52.) " We ſhall not all ſleep, but we ſhall all be changed, in a " moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the laſt trump, (for the " trumpet ſhall ſound) and the dead ſhall be raiſed incorruptible, and " we ſhall be changed:" and again in his firſt epiſtle to the Theſſalonians,

lonians, (IV. 16, 17.) " The Lord himſelf ſhall deſcend from heaven " with a ſhout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump " of God, and the dead in Chriſt ſhall riſe firſt; then we which are " alive and remain ſhall be caught up together with them in the clouds " to meet the Lord in the air."

That all people and nations ſhall be convened and aſſembled, and all be judged without privilege or exemption. For according to St. Paul (2 Cor. V. 10.) " we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat " of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body, " according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad:" and according to Chriſt himſelf in the goſpel (Matt. XXV. 31, 32.) " when " the Son of man ſhall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with " him, then ſhall he ſit upon the throne of his glory, and before him " ſhall be gathered all nations."

That men ſhall be judged according to their works of every kind; as Solomon aſſures us, (Eccleſ. XII. 14.) " God ſhall bring every work " into judgment with every ſecret thing, whether it be good or whe- " ther it be evil;" and as St. Paul teſtifies, (1 Cor. IV. 4, 5.) " He " that judgeth is the Lord, therefore judge nothing before the time, " until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things " of darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the counſels of the hearts, and " then ſhall every man have praiſe of God;" and as St. John in the Revelation, (XX. 12, &c.) " I ſaw the dead ſmall and great ſtand " before God, and the books were opened, and another book was " opened which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of " thoſe things, which were written in the books, according to their " works; and the ſea gave up the dead which were in it, and death " and hell delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were " judged every man according to their works."

That the frame of this preſent world ſhall be diſſolved, as St. Peter expreſſeth it, (2 Pet. III. 10.) " the heavens ſhall paſs away with a " great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, the earth " alſo and all the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up;" and as St. John in the Revelation, (XX. 11.) " I ſaw a great white throne,

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" and him that ſat on it, from whoſe face the earth and the heaven " fled away, and there was found no place for them." It is not only the expreſs doctrin of ſcripture, but was a notion, which from whatever origin or tradition derived prevailed likewiſe among the heathens, that this world would at laſt ſubmit to a general conflagration. As it once periſhed by water, ſo it would again be deſtroyed by fire: or in the language of St. Peter (2 Pet. III. 6, 7.) " the world that then was, " being overflowed with water, periſhed; but the" preſent world, " the heavens and earth which are now, are kept in ſtore reſerved " unto fire againſt the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly " men." By what means this fire will be kindled, and this general conflagration be completed, it is impoſſible for us, having no light from revelation, with any degree of certainty to determin; whether by the earth's falling into the ſun, as ſome have conceived; or by a comet's approaching too near the earth, as others have ſurmiſed; or by what appears more probable, fiery eruptions from the bowels of the earth, as in volcanos and burning-mountains, together with the concurrence of that elementary fire, which we know by experiments in electricity to be diffuſed every where in the air and atmoſphere. However it may be effected, it is certainly as eaſy for God to burn the world as to create it; for beſides his other attributes (Heb. XII. 29.) " our God is a conſuming fire."

That the angels ſhall not be merely ſpectators of this great ſcene but ſhall be employed as miniſters to ſeparate the good from the bad; as our Saviour himſelf informs us, (Matt. XIII. 40, &c.) " As there- " fore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire, ſo ſhall it be in " the end of this world: the Son of man ſhall ſend forth his angels, " and they ſhall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and " them which do iniquity, and ſhall caſt them into a furnace of fire; " there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth:" and again with little variation (ver. 49, 50.) " the angels ſhall come forth, and ſever " the wicked from among the juſt, and ſhall caſt them into the fur- " nace of fire" &c. As the angels are miniſters to conſign the wicked to the place of torments, ſo we may with reaſon conclude that they will

will alſo convey the righteous to the regions of bliſs, as Lazarus (Luke XVI. 22.) " was carried by the angels into Abraham's boſom."

And finally that the righteous ſhall be rewarded with everlaſting happineſs, and the wicked condemned to everlaſting miſery; as we are taught by our judge himſelf who ſhould beſt know; (Matt. XXV.) He will ſay to the righteous, " Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit " the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world;" and he will ſay to the wicked, " Depart from me ye curſed into ever- " laſting fire prepared for the devil and his angels;" and theſe ſhall " go away into everlaſting puniſhment, but the righteous into life " eternal."

Such are the deſcriptions which the ſcripture giveth us of this ſolemnity; and theſe things are written to awaken our attention, to imprint upon our minds the greater awe and reverence of the future judgment, and to make us the more ſollicitous to provide and prepare ourſelves for it, drawing for ourſelves the concluſion that St. Peter draweth for us, (2 Pet. III. 11, 12.) " Seeing then that all theſe things ſhall be " diſſolved, what manner of perſons ought we to be in all holy conver- " ſation and godlineſs, looking for and haſtning unto the coming of " the day of God?" Indeed ſome of the expreſſions in theſe deſcriptions (as " the books were opened," and " the dead were judged out " of thoſe things which were written in the books") are probably figurative, and ſeem to be metaphors borrowed from ſome earthly court of judicature and applied to the great judicature of heaven. But certainly the main of theſe deſcriptions is to be underſtood litterally, Chriſt coming in his glory and the holy angels with him, the dead riſing and the living caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, all people and nations aſſembled, men judged according to their works of every kind, the frame of this preſent world diſſolved, the righteous ſeparated from the wicked, and the righteous rewarded with everlaſting happineſs, and the wicked condemned to everlaſting miſery. And what a pleaſing dreadful ſolemnity is this! and as we may piouſly ſuppoſe deſigned, that as Jeſus is to be honored he may be honored in the moſt public manner, that virtue may be the

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more openly rewarded, and vice the more openly condemned, that the myſteries of divine providence may be unraveled, and the wiſdom and juſtice and goodneſs of God in the government of the world may be fully manifeſted in the ſight of men and angels; and ſo in the end all may unite and confeſs (Rev. XVI. 7.) "Even ſo Lord God almighty, "true and righteous are thy judgments!" (2 Pet. III. 14.) "Where-"fore, beloved, ſeeing that ye look for ſuch things, be diligent, that "ye may be found of him in peace, without ſpot and blameleſs."

III. As to the *time* of the judgment, reaſon is here entirely in the dark, we can have no light or knowlege but what is derived from revelation. It is commonly called the *day* of the Lord, and the *day* of judgment. But there is no neceſſity that the word *day* ſhould be underſtood ſtrictly; it may be taken in the larger ſenſe of *time* or *ſeaſon*: and in this ſenſe it is uſed ſometimes in the beſt heathen authors as might eaſily be proved if there was occaſion, and often in ſcripture. Thus (Gen. II. 4.) "Theſe are the generations of the heavens and of "the earth, when they were created in the day," that is in the ſix days, "that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens and every "plant of the field." The "day of temptation in the wilderneſs" (Pſal. XCV. 8.) we know was *forty years*. "In the *day* of proſpe-"rity be joyful, but in the *day* of adverſity conſider, (Eccleſ. VII. 14.) that is, In the *time* of proſperity be joyful, but in the *time* of adverſity conſider. "If thou hadſt known, even thou," ſaith our Saviour weeping over Jeruſalem, (Luke XIX. 42.) "at leaſt in this "thy day," that is at leaſt in this thy ſeaſon, in this thy opportunity, "the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from "thine eyes." "Your father Abraham rejoiced to ſee my day," that is the time of the Meſſiah, "and he ſaw it and was glad. (John VIII. 56.) And what in the original is (Acts VIII. 1.) εγενετο δε εν εκεινη τη ημερα διωγμος μεγας, At that *day* there was a great perſecution is rightly rendered in our tranſlation, "At that *time* there was a great perſecu-"tion."

There is no need then to underſtand the word ſtrictly: and in all probability there may be aſſigned for the general judgment a larger

portion of time than what we call *a day*. It is called in ſcripture (Jude 6.) " the great day" of judgment, which ſeemeth to imply ſome length of time as well as great and ſignal events; and there hath been a tradition among Jews and Chriſtians, that the great day of judgment ſhall laſt a thouſand years, in the beginning or morning whereof ſhall be the judgment of Antichriſt, and the firſt reſurrection, and in the latter end or evening ſhall be the laſt reſurrection and general judgment. Not but God could judge the world in one day as well as in a thouſand years, but then angels and men could not ſo well apprehend the fitneſs and exactneſs of the judgment, and therefore the time of it may be prolonged in condeſcenſion to their capacities. Thus much indeed the phraſe *the day of judgment* intimates, that there is a certain time of general judgment: but how long that time will be, becauſe it is of little uſe or conſequence to us to know, the ſcripture hath not revealed it particularly to us.

As we know not the time *how long* it will be, ſo neither do we know the time *when* it will be. There were ſome even in the apoſtles days, who from ſome expreſſions in the apoſtles writings were apprehenſive that the end of the world would be in that age: but herein they were greatly miſtaken, underſtanding that to be ſpoken of the end of the world which was ſpoken only of the deſtruction of Jeruſalem, or perhaps of death, for the death of any man is the end of the world to him. The apoſtles could not teach others nor believe themſelves, that the day of judgment was then actually at hand, becauſe our Saviour had told them before (Luke XXI. 24.) that " Jeruſalem " ſhould be troden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gen- " tiles be fulfilled," which plainly denotes a long ſeaſon: and St. Paul in particular admoniſheth the Theſſalonians (2 Theſſ. II. 2, 3.) " not to be troubled in mind as if the day of Chriſt was at hand, for " that day ſhould not come except there come a falling away firſt," and ſeveral extraordinary events happen. If we conſult reaſon, if we conſult revelation, about the time when the day of general judgment ſhall come, neither of them affords us any light, both of them leave us in darkneſs. St. Peter and St. Paul (2 Pet. III. 10. 1 Theſſ. V. 2.)

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to expreſs the uncertainty of it, compare the coming of the day of the Lord to the coming of "a thief in the night," alluding probably to thoſe words of our Saviour (Matt. XXV. 43, 44.) "If the good man "of the houſe had known in what watch the thief would come, he "would have watched, and would not have ſuffered his houſe to be "broken up; therefore be ye alſo ready, for in ſuch an hour as you "think not the Son of man cometh." In the Revelation alſo the coming of Chriſt is more than once compared to the coming of a thief. (III. 3.) "If thou ſhalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief," ſays our bleſſed Lord, "and thou ſhalt not know what hour I will "come upon thee:" and again (XVI. 15.) "Behold I come as a "thief, bleſſed is he that watcheth." Nay the ſcripture aſſerts, not only that we are ignorant of the time and ſeaſon of the judgment, but that all creatures are ignorant of it; not only that it is unknown to us, but that it is known only to God; (Matt. XXIV. 36.) "Of that day "and hour" (of that day and ſeaſon, for if the *day* is not known certainly the *hour* is not) "Of that day and ſeaſon knoweth no man, no "not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." Nay more, not only all creatures, but the Son himſelf, *as* the Son of man, is ignorant of it; (Mark XIII. 32.) "Of that day and that ſeaſon knoweth "no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, "but the Father:" that is as I have explained it (2) elſewhere; this is ſpoken with regard to his human nature, not his divine. Though as God he might know all things, yet he might be ignorant of ſome things as man. And of this particular the Meſſiah might be ignorant, becauſe it was no part of his office or commiſſion to reveal it.

Since then the preciſe time of the general judgment is ſuch an abſolute ſecret to men and angels, how vain is the curioſity, how intolerable is the preſumption of thoſe men, who would pry into it, and pretend exactly to define it? When prophecies are given, and a number of years is aſſigned for their completion, there indeed it is highly commendable to call in the aids of human learning, and to endevor to make profane hiſtory ſubſervient to ſacred, in clearing the dates and

(2) Diſſertations on the Prophecies. XXI.

fixing the terms. As particularly now thoſe who have labored to explain Daniel's prophecy of the ſeventy weeks, and to fix and aſcertain the time when they begin and when they end, have certainly been engaged in a very uſeful work, and deſerve the thanks of the Chriſtian world. But where no date or number of years is aſſigned, where it is ſaid ſo poſitively that "of that day and ſeaſon knoweth no man," where it is repeated ſo often that "the day of the Lord cometh as a "thief in the night;" there to pretend to define and ſpecify the time is certainly the way that "profeſſing ourſelves wiſe we ſhall become "fools."

And yet there have been men ſo particular as to point out the year and the very day of the year, on which the world ſhould end and the judgment begin; and ſome of them have lived long enough to ſee themſelves miſtaken in their calculations, the time prefixed by them expired, and ſtill all things continuing as they were from the beginning of the creation. In the laſt century it was a prevailing notion with ſome ſectaries, that the world would be deſtroyed in the year 1656; becauſe I think they reckoned that the flood came upon the old world in that year from the creation. But moſt of theſe fanciful ſchemes and calculations, I believe, have been founded originally on ſome miſunderſtood and miſapplied paſſages of the Revelation; though the Revelation is ſo far from defining the particular time, that as I obſerved before, the coming of Chriſt is more than once in that book compared to "the coming of a thief."

There is indeed a famous tradition concerning the duration of the world, which is older than the Revelation, and is derived from the ſchool of Elias, a Jewiſh doctor who lived 200 years or thereabout before our Saviour. This tradition is, that the world ſhould laſt 6000 years, 2000 before the law, 2000 under the law, and 2000 under the Meſſiah: and it prevailed not only among the Jews, but likewiſe among ſeveral of the Chriſtian fathers, chiefly by reaſon of the analogy between the creation of the world and the duration of the world. For as the world was created in ſix days, ſo they conceived it would endure 6000 years (2 Pet. III. 8.) "one day being with the Lord

"as

" as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day." But allowing that the world was to continue juſt 6000 years, yet I am afraid our chronology is not ſo certain, as that we can know exactly when the world was made; and then neither can we know exactly when it will end. We know that the ſcene will be changed before we come to the laſt act, and ſeveral great revolutions will happen, as particularly the fall of Antichriſt and the converſion of the Jews; and when we ſee theſe things accompliſhed, we may then lift up our heads, and be confident that the time is approaching; though even then we ſhall not know how ſoon the day of the Lord will follow, it will ſtill come " as a thief in " the night." In the mean while we do not ſee that the ſtars fade, or the earth decays with age; we do not find the ſun to grow dim, or the ocean to grow dry; there is not the leaſt ſign or appearance in nature of the diſſolution of nature; and they who ſhall think either by philoſophy or prophecy, by natural reaſon or divine revelation, to prove when it will be, will in the end prove nothing but their own vanity and ignorance.

It would better become us to acquieſce in our ignorance than to preſume thus to be wiſe above what is written. (Acts I. 7.) " It is not " for us to know the times or the ſeaſons which the Father hath put " in his own power." God hath revealed every thing relating to the judgment, that is neceſſary, every thing that is proper for us to know; and hath concealed nothing from us but what it is better for us not to know, nothing but what even we ourſelves may apprehend ſome reaſons for his concealing. And in particular the reaſons for his concealing the time when the day of judgment ſhall be, the very reaſons which the ſcripture itſelf aſſigns us, are that we might conſtantly " watch and be ready," that we might always " have our loins girded about and our lights burning, and we ourſelves like unto men, " who wait for their lord." This we know, and this is enough for us, the judgment is certain though the time of it is uncertain. If it was known to be ſooner, it might render us too neglectful of our worldly affairs; if it was known to be later, it might render us too

care-

careleſs of our ſpiritual concerns; and therefore the knowlege whether it ſhall be ſooner or later is wiſely concealed from us.

Inſtead then of awakening our curioſity, it ſhould excite our vigilance; inſtead of putting us upon finding out the time which is not in our power, it ſhould rather engage us in preparing for the time which is in our power. What may come at any time, we ſhould be prepared for at all times. There is no kind of probability that the day of judgment will be in our days, there is great probability that it is ſtill at a conſiderable diſtance from us: but the day of death, we are ſure, cannot be very far from any of us, and may be very near to moſt of us, and this very night our ſouls may be required of us. Oh! let us therefore to day, while it is called to day, work out our ſalvation with fear and trembling; let us keep our lamps always trimmed and burning, that whenever our Lord ſhall come, we may be ready to go forth and meet him. "Watch ye therefore, (for ye know not when the "Son of man cometh) leſt coming ſuddenly he find you ſleeping. "Bleſſed are thoſe ſervants whom the Lord when he cometh ſhall find "watching."

DISSERTATION LX.

On the final State and Condition of Men.

AFTER the general judgment and the diviſion and diſtribution then made, we ſeem well nigh arrived at the end and conſummation of all things: but human curioſity is ſtill for conducting us farther; and there yet remains to be conſidered the final ſtate and condition of men, to what regions they will be conſigned, and what will be their lot and portion there. But in this world we can attain but

but very imperfect very inadequate ideas of the world to come; and it is much better fairly to confeſs our ignorance, than vainly to pretend and counterfeit knowlege where we have none. We can diſcover little of a future ſtate by the light of reaſon alone; we can draw no certain inferences and concluſions without the help of divine revelation: and as the ſubject is curious as well as of the greateſt concern and conſequence to us, let us diligently inquire what the Scripture hath intimated to us concerning theſe two important and intereſting points, 1ſt the different places of abode of the bleſſed and of the damned, and 2dly the happineſs of the bleſſed and the miſery of the damned together with the different degrees and the duration of their reſpective rewards or puniſhments.

I. The *different places* of abode of the bleſſed and of the damned. The common place or receptacle of departed ſouls is called שאול *Sheol* by the Hebrews, and ἀΐδης *Hades* by the Greeks. *Sheol* is derived from a verb ſignifying to *crave*; death and the grave being always craving and never ſatisfied. *Hades* ἀΐδης is much the ſame as αειδης *inviſible*, to which etymology Plato and the beſt Greek writers often allude. Our old Engliſh or Saxon word *Hell* is much of the ſame import as *Hades*, being derived from a (1) verb ſignifying to *hide* or *conceal*, ſtill in uſe in the weſtern parts of England. In this ſenſe it occurs in ſcripture "Thou wilt not leave my ſoul in hell," and in the creed called the apoſtles "He deſcended into hell:" but is now commonly uſed in a more limited ſenſe for the place of the torments of the damned. *Sheol* then and *Hades* are the names for the general receptacle of departed ſouls; and in this general receptacle there are different manſions for good and bad ſouls according to both Jews and Greeks. For we read in ſcripture (Luke XXIII. 43.) of ſpirits "in paradiſe," and (1 Pet. III. 19.) of ſpirits "in priſon." Lazarus was "in Abraham's boſom" (Luke XVI. 23, 26.) at the ſame time, the rich man was "in torments:" and between them there was "a great gulf fixed, ſo that they could "not paſs" the one to the other. The Greeks had likewiſe their *Elyſian fields* and their *Tartarus*; the former deſcribed as a lightſome and

(1) Lord King's Crit. Hiſt. of the Apoſtles Creed, Chap. 4. p. 194. 3d Edit.

cheerful,

cheerful, the latter as a dark and diſmal habitation. The Greeks believed that the giants, who rebelled againſt the gods, were caſt down into Tartarus in the depths of the earth: and St. Peter himſelf hath applied the word to the fallen angels, which is the only uſe made of it in all the ſcriptures. (2 Pet. II. 5.) "God ſpared not the angels that "ſinned, but caſt them down to hell," or rather "to Tartarus, and "delivered them into chains of darkneſs, to be reſerved unto judg-"ment." St. Jude hath ſaid alſo, (ver. 6.) "The angels which "kept not their firſt eſtate, but left their own habitation, he hath re-"ſerved in everlaſting chains under darkneſs unto the judgment of the "great day." But St. Paul hath aſſigned the air as the habitation of the fallen angels, ſtiling Satan (Eph. II. 2.) "the prince of the power "of the air," and his angels (VI. 12.) "the rulers of the darkneſs "of this world, and ſpiritual wickedneſs," or "wicked ſpirits in high "places:" And therefore to reconcile the apoſtles together, we may ſuppoſe that St. Peter conceived the air to be the *Tartarus* of the fallen angels, which may be conſidered as a darkſome priſon in compariſon with the brighter regions from whence they fell: and the epithet uſually given by the poets to Tartarus is ηεροεις *airy dark*. We have it both in (2) Homer and in Heſiod. We may farther improve the ſenſe by agreeing with (3) Mr. Mede, that the words "into" and "in chains "of darkneſs" ſhould be tranſlated "for chains of darkneſs." For the fallen angels, though exiled and confined to this airy region, yet cannot properly be ſaid to be "reſerved in everlaſting chains under "darkneſs," when they are called "the rulers of the darkneſs of this "world," and their chieftain hath the title of "the prince of the "power of the air," and is ſaid to be (Job I. 7. II. 2. 1 Pet. V. 8.) "going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it, ſeek-"ing whom he may devour." The paſſage in St. Peter will then ſtand thus; "God ſpared not the angels that ſinned, but ταρταρωσας "having caſt them down to Tartarus, delivered them to be reſerved "for chains of darkneſs at the judgment." That in St. Jude thus with leſs alteration; "The angels which kept not their firſt eſtate, but left

(2) Ταρταρον ηεροεντα. Hom. Il. VIII. 13. Ταρταρε ηεροεντος. Heſ. Theog. 736. (3) Diſc. IV.

"their

" their own habitation, he hath reſerved for everlaſting chains under " darkneſs at the judgment of the great day," when (Rev. XX. 10.) " they will be caſt into the lake of fire and brimſtone," that " ever- " laſting fire (Matt. XXV. 41.) prepared for the devil and his angels."

After the general judgment the dwelling places of the bleſſed and of the damned are diſtinguiſhed by the names of *heaven*, and *hell* in the more reſtrained ſenſe of the word. *Heaven* is a word of large import and ſignification. Sometimes it ſignifies the air or atmoſphere, as τα πετεινα του ουρανου *the fowls of heaven* in our tranſlation *the fowls of the air*, and *the clouds of heaven* in ſeveral places. Sometimes it ſignifies the ſphere of the ſtars, which are therefore called *the ſtars of heaven*. But moſt uſually it ſignifies *heaven* properly ſo called, which St. Paul (2 Cor. XII. 2.) denominates " the third heaven." As I remember, the ſchoolmen reckon *ſeven* concentric heavens, the higheſt or laſt of which is the *fiery* or *empyrean* heaven: but ſuch is the vanity and affectation of ſome men, that they will ſay ſomething where they really know nothing. *Heaven* is a general name for the place of God's peculiar reſidence, the habitation of the bleſſed angels, from whence our Saviour deſcended, and whither after his reſurrection he aſcended again, where he ſitteth at the right hand of God, and from whence he will come to judgment, having (John XIV. 2, 3.) " prepared a place for " us, that where he is, there we may be alſo." In ſcripture indeed we read often of *the heavens* in the plural number, the word being alſo plural in the Hebrew language: and who can define what variety there may be in infinite ſpace, or how manifold the exertions of that being, whom (1 Kings VIII. 27.) " the heaven and heaven of heavens can- " not contain?" It is reaſonable to believe at leaſt that there are different degrees and ſtations in heaven; our bleſſed Saviour having expreſly informed us, (John XIV. 2.) that " in his father's houſe are " many manſions."

Hell, as the place of torment, is no where mentioned in the writings of Moſes, nor indeed was there any occaſion to mention it; a future ſtate being no part of the ſanction of the Jewiſh law. Solomon

the firſt, who (4) is thought to have alluded to the place of torment in that text, (Prov. XXI. 16.) "The man that wandereth out of the "way of underſtanding ſhall remain in the congregation of the dead," or "of the giants," as it is in ſeveral verſions; the giants of the old world, who by their wickedneſs drew on the deluge of waters: and in that text of the ſtrange woman, (II. 18.) "Her houſe inclineth "unto death, and her paths unto the dead" or "the giants:" and in that again of the ſame woman, (IX. 17, 18.) "Stolen waters are "ſweet, and bread eaten in ſecret is pleaſant; but he knoweth not "that the dead," or "the giants, are there, and that her gueſts are "in the depths of hell." But perhaps our tranſlation is as juſt and proper as any, the word being often joined in conſtruction with *death* and the *grave*; or if the place of puniſhment be here intended, it muſt be the puniſhment immediately conſequent upon death in *Sheol* or *Hades*, the inviſible ſtate of departed ſouls. *Gehenna* is the more uſual name for the place of torment, and better known among the Jews; but the origin of this name is of a later date. *Gehenna* or *the valley of Hinnom*, the name of the old proprietor of the land, was a place in the neighbourhood of Jeruſalem, where the worſhippers of Moloch offered and burnt in the fire their ſons and their daughters to that grim idol; and that part, where theſe ſacrifices were made, was called *Tophet* from *Toph* a drum, drums and ſuch like noiſy inſtruments being employed to drown the cries and ſhrieks of theſe miſerable children. Juſtly offended at ſuch a barbarous ſpecies of idolatry, the good king Joſiah defiled the place, cut down the groves, brake down the images and altars, and filled it with dead mens bones, the bones of the prieſts who ſacrificed there: and henceforth it became a kind of a common ſewer, where all the carrion and garbage and offals of the city were thrown, and to prevent any infection a fire was kept continually burning to conſume them. This valley was farther ſignalized by two memorable occurrences before and after this time. For here it was that Sennacherib the king of Aſſyria's army, conſiſting of a hundred and fourſcore and five thouſand men, were all ſlain in one

(4) See Mede, Diſc. VII.

night

night by a deſtroying angel, and their bodies conſumed by fire, according to the prophecy of Iſaiah, (XXX. 31, 33.) " For through " the voice of the Lord ſhall the Aſſyrian be beaten down which ſmote " with a rod; For Tophet is ordained of old, yea for the king it is " prepared; he hath made it deep and large, the pile thereof is fire " and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a ſtream of brim- " ſtone, doth kindle it." Here alſo was a great ſlaughter and maſſacre of the idolatrous Jews by the Babylonians, and their carcaſes more than could be buried were left a prey to the birds of the air and to the beaſts of the field, according to the prediction of Jeremiah, (VII. 31, 32, 33.) " They have built the high places of Tophet, which is " in the valley of the ſon of Hinnom, to burn their ſons and their " daughters in the fire, which I commanded them not, neither came " it into my heart: Therefore behold the days come, ſaith the Lord, " that it ſhall no more be called Tophet, nor The valley of the ſon of " Hinnom, but The valley of ſlaughter; for they ſhall bury in To- " phet till there be no place: And the carcaſes of this people ſhall be " meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beaſts of the earth, " and none ſhall fray them away." Such a horrid place as this, ſo deſervedly execrated both by God and men, the ſtage of ſuch deſtruction, the ſcene of ſuch continual burning, was fitly conſidered by the Jews as a type and figure of hell-fire, and the name is adopted and repeated ſeveral times by our Saviour himſelf in the goſpels. One other name there is in ſcripture for the place of torment, *the lake of fire and brimſtone*, which is a manifeſt alluſion to the lake Aſphaltites, where Sodom and Gomorrha and the cities of the plain were overthrown by brimſtone and fire from heaven, and as St. Jude ſaith (ver. 7.) " are ſet forth for an example ſuffering the vengeance of " eternal fire." For men have no other way of expreſſing the inviſible things of a future ſtate but by ſome ſenſible objects, ſuch as they have ſeen or known or been accuſtomed to in this world.

But theſe names will lead us but a little way towards finding out the nature and ſituation of theſe places. We know, that in our " Fa- " ther's houſe are many manſions;" but we cannot in the leaſt diſ-

cover, in what part of infinite ſpace will be the manſions of " juſt " men made perfect." We know, that after the general conflagration, when theſe heavens and this earth ſhall be deſtroyed, (2 Pet. III. 13.) there will be " new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth " righteouſneſs;" but we cannot by any means be certain of what ſome have ſuppoſed, that this earth ſo renewed will be the habitation of the righteous. It would appear more probable, if our Saviour had not intimated, that he was to go and prepare a place for them; (John XIV. 2, 3.) " I go to prepare a place for you, And if I go and pre- " pare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto my- " ſelf, that where I am there ye may be alſo;" and afterwards (XVII. 24.) " Father, I will that they alſo whom thou haſt given me be " with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou " haſt given me." Neither can we learn with any more certainty which is the place of hell. Some have imagined, that the fire at the center of the earth is the fire of hell: but it hath never been proved, that there is any ſuch central fire; it contradicts all our notions of philoſophy. If there be any ſuch fire, it may be prepared ready for the general conflagration; but after the general conflagration, we are aſſured, there will be " new heavens and a new earth wherein dwell- " eth righteouſneſs," and conſequently there can be no ſuch place as hell. Others have conceived that a comet, and others again that the ſun will be the place of hell. There (as we have obſerved in (5) a former diſſertation) the fire is already kindled: but the Lord of the univerſe can eaſily kindle any ſtar or planet, that it ſhall immediately become a furnace of fire for the puniſhment of rebellious creatures againſt their creator.

Heaven is commonly ſpoken of as ſomething very high and much above us, hell on the contrary as ſomething very low and much underneath us: and the ſcripture rather favors this prejudice, ſpeaking in this inſtance as in many others, " after the manner of men becauſe of " the infirmities of our fleſh." Hence it is ſaid of God's unſearchable wiſdom, (Job XI. 8.) " It is as high as heaven, what canſt thou do?

(5) See An Explanation of St. Mark, IX. 49, 50.

" deeper

" deeper than hell, what canſt thou know?" Hence our Saviour ſaith, (Matt. XI. 23.) " And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto " heaven, ſhalt be brought down to hell." Hence we read (Philip. II. 10.) of " things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under " the earth." A notion generally prevailed (6) both among Jews and Heathens, that the happy regions of the pious lay on the right-hand, and the dolorous manſions of the wicked on the left:

Dextera ————————
Hac iter Elyſium nobis; at læva malorum
Exercet pœnas, et ad impia Tartara mittit: Virgil.

and this notion is ſomewhat countenanced by our Saviour himſelf, in his deſcription of the proceſs of the day of judgment, placing (Matt. XXV. 33.) " the ſheep on his right-hand, but the goats on his left." Another opinion commonly received among them was, that angels demons or ſome ſuch beings would be the conductors of good and bad men to the place of happineſs or the place of miſery: and this opinion hath in great meaſure the ſanction of our Saviour's own authority; for he ſaith, (Matt. XXV. 31.) " The Son of man ſhall come in his glory, " and all the holy angels with him;" and (XIII. 41, 49, 50.) " The " Son of man ſhall ſend forth his angels, and they ſhall gather out " of his kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity; " and the angels ſhall come forth, and ſever the wicked from among " the juſt, and ſhall caſt them into the furnace of fire; there ſhall " be wailing and gnaſhing of teeth." Which will lead us very properly to our ſecond head of inquiry.

II. The *happineſs* of the bleſſed and the *miſery* of the damned together with the different *degrees* and the *duration* of their reſpective rewards or puniſhments. St. Paul ſaith (1 Cor. II. 9.) " Eye hath not " ſeen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the " things which God hath prepared for them that love him;" and when he himſelf was " caught up into the third heaven or paradiſe," (2 Cor. XII. 4.) " he heard unſpeakable words, which it is not lawful

(6) See Windet de vita functorum ſtatu, &c. Sect. 6.

" for

" for a man to utter:" And if divine inſpiration could not enable an apoſtle to conceive and utter theſe things, how far muſt they tranſcend all human comprehenſion? It is truly ſaid in the Wiſdom of Solomon, (IX. 16.) " Hardly do we gueſs aright at things that are upon earth, " and with labor do we find the things that are before us; but the " things that are in heaven, who hath ſearched out?" The ſcripture therefore in condeſcenſion to the weakneſs of our capacities repreſents the happineſs of the next world under the figures of " a river of plea- " ſures, a tree of life, a marriage-feaſt, a crown, a kingdom" and the like, adopting what are commonly thought the beſt and higheſt of earthly delights to give us ſome faint notions and ideas of the ſuperior joys of heaven. But we may learn without a figure, that our bodies will be then " incorruptible," and " immortal, powerful" and " glo- " rious, ſpiritual" and " heavenly:" and all the powers and faculties of our ſouls will be ſo much inlarged and improved, that we ſhall become (Luke XX. 36.) " equal unto the angels, and the children of God, being " the children of the reſurrection." We ſhall feel no more weakneſs and ſickneſs of body, no more trouble and anguiſh of mind; for (Rev. XXI. 4.) " God ſhall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there " ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall " be any more pain, for the former things are paſſed away; all things " are become new in Chriſt Jeſus." Our capacities being greater will be employed upon greater and nobler objects, in contemplation of the divine attributes and perfections, the nature and orders of angels, the works of creation, the diſpenſations of providence, the myſteries of redemption, ſo that (Eph. III. 18, 19.) we " may be able to compre- " hend with all ſaints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, " and highth, and to know the love of Chriſt which paſſeth know- " lege," the knowlege of this imperfect ſtate. Now (1 Cor. XIII. 9, 10, 12.) " we know in part, and we propheſy in part; but when " that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part ſhall be " done away: now we ſee through a glaſs darkly, but then face to " face; now we know in part, but then ſhall we know even as alſo " we are known." We ſhall advance in virtue, as well as in know-

lege,

lege, our ſentiments more refined, our affections more elevated, our piety more ſincere and pure, our devotion more animated and inflamed; and it will be our conſtant delight as much as our duty to give (Rev. V. 13.) "bleſſing and honor and glory and power unto Him that ſit-"teth upon the throne and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." The company and converſation of heaven will alſo be no little addition to our happineſs: and if the pſalmiſt could ſay, "All my delight is upon "the ſaints that are in the earth, and upon ſuch as excel in virtue;" how much more ſhall we be delighted and improved in ſociety and friendſhip, in love and harmony (Heb. XII. 22, 23, 24.) "with an "innumerable company of angels, with the general aſſembly and church "of the firſt born, and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect," we ourſelves made perfect in like manner. But we ſhall attain to yet greater felicity than this, for we ſhall be admitted to the beatific viſion, "to "Jeſus the mediator of the new covenant, and to God the judge of "all," whom the more we know, the more we ſhall love and adore: and we ſhall not only ſee him, but we ſhall be like him, "our bodies faſhioned like unto Chriſt's glorious body, our ſouls be-"holding the glory of the Lord, and changed into the ſame image "from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (1 John III. 2, 3.) "Beloved, now are we the ſons of God, and it doth not yet "appear what we ſhall be; but we know that when he ſhall appear, "we ſhall be like him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is: And every man "that hath this hope in him purifieth himſelf, even as he is pure."

For the ſame reaſons that we cannot perfectly conceive the felicities of heaven, neither can we fully apprehend the torments of hell; becauſe they are ſuch as "eye hath not ſeen nor ear heard," we have had no kind of experience of them, they lie at a diſtance out of the ſphere of this world, and we cannot be ſupplied with adequate ideas from ſenſation or reflection. This we may ſuppoſe at the leaſt, that there will be not only an abſolute deprivation of all good, but likewiſe an actual infliction of real evil; and that the happineſs of the bleſſed and the miſery of the damned will in many reſpects be directly contrary the one to the other. As the righteous will have "all tears

"wiped

" wiped from their eyes," and " there will be no more ſorrow nor " crying;" ſo the wicked will be condemned to " weeping and wail- " ing and gnaſhing of teeth." As the former will enjoy the conti- nual feaſt of a good conſcience, and " have confidence toward God;" ſo the latter will be preyed upon by " the worm that never dieth," the ſtings and laſhes of a guilty mind, the pangs and agonies of remorſe and deſpair. As the former will " ſhine forth as the ſun in the " kingdom of their Father;" ſo the latter will be caſt out into " outer darkneſs" intellectual as well as ſenſual darkneſs, doubts and difficulties, perplexities and horrors, no light or comfort with- in or without. As the former will be principally employed in the joyful and pleaſant work of praiſe and thankſgiving; ſo the lat- ter poſſibly in what they are too often guilty of in this life, dread- ful oaths and execrations, blaſpheming their maker, and curſing themſelves. As the former will be made more happy in the ſociety and intercourſe of bleſſed ſaints and angels of God; ſo the latter will be rendered ſtill more miſerable in the company of wretched ſinners and the devil and his angels, accuſing and reproaching, reviling and inſulting one another. As the former will be bleſſed with the beati- fic viſion of God; ſo the latter will be " caſt away from his pre- " ſence," or rather, as God muſt neceſſarily be preſent every where, in hell as much as in heaven, they may be filled with " the terrors " of the almighty," and as there is *a beatific viſion* or delightful ſight of God in heaven, ſo there is (as Mr. Broughton (7) ingeniouſly ex- preſſes it) what may with equal propriety be called *a terrific viſion* or dreadful ſight of him in hell.

At the general reſurrection men riſing with bodies, it may be queſ- tioned, whether their bodies alſo may not be made partakers with them in their rewards or puniſhments, whether ſome bodily pleaſures or pains may not conſtitute a part of the happineſs or miſery of the next world. I anſwer, it is probable that they do, and that this is one rea- ſon for raiſing men again with bodies, that their happineſs or miſery may be complete in body as well as in ſoul. But then the corporeal

(7) Mr. Broughton's Proſpect of Futurity, Diſſert. 4. Sect. 4.

pleaſures

pleaſures of the next life muſt be totally different from thoſe of the preſent, as different as a body "incorruptible" and "immortal, ſpiritual" and "heavenly" is from a corruptible and mortal and fleſhly and earthly tabernacle, in ſhort as different as a body of holineſs from a body of ſin. We have poſitive aſſurance, that one of the higheſt and beſt of earthly delights hath no place in heaven, for there (Matt. XXII. 30.) "they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as "the angels of God in heaven." It is probable too that ſome corporeal pains may aggravate the miſery, as well as ſome corporeal pleaſures inhance the happineſs of the next life: And particularly *fire* and *hell-fire* being ſo frequently mentioned in ſcripture, and repeated again and again as part of the puniſhment of the damned, it ſhould ſeem to be ſomething more than a bare metaphor. But in a former diſſertation, being an explanation of St. Mark IX. 49, 50. I have offered the reaſons why I conceive *the fire of hell* not to be metaphorical but real; and I would rather chooſe to refer the reader thither than repeat the ſame arguments here. But if "fire" be the portion of the wicked, "fire" and that other part of their puniſhment, which is called "the blackneſs of darkneſs and outer darkneſs," may be thought not to be very conſiſtent with each other: but if the fire be not of a different nature from any that we are acquainted with, we may naturally enough ſuppoſe the flame to be mingled and involved in ſo much ſmoke, that it may at the ſame time be dark, or as our great poet expreſſes it,

No light but rather darkneſs viſible.

Several of the (8) ancients, ſome Heathen philoſophers and poets, ſome Jewiſh rabbi's, ſome Chriſtian fathers have imagined that the puniſhment of the wicked will be varied and alternate, that they will be removed by turns from exceſſive heat to cold, and from exceſſive cold to heat again. This notion is ſuppoſed to be countenanced by a paſſage in the book of Job (XXIV. 19.) as it is in the Vulgar Latin, *Ad nimium calorem tranſiet ab aquis nivium*, "He ſhall paſs to too much

(8) See Windet de Vita functorum ſtatu, &c. Sect. 9.

" heat from the waters of ſnow :" but this verſion by no means agrees with the original, and differs from all other verſions as much as it doth from the Engliſh, " Drought and heat conſume the ſnow-waters, ſo " doth the grave thoſe which have ſinned." It is alſo ſuppoſed, that in our Saviour's deſcription of the torments of hell the " gnaſhing of " teeth" alludes to the pain occaſioned by extremity of cold: but the words immediately preceding are (Matt. XIII. 42, 50.) " And ſhall " caſt them into the furnace of fire, there ſhall be wailing and gnaſh- " ing of teeth;" and conſequently the " gnaſhing of teeth" cannot be the reſult of extremity of cold, but muſt proceed altogether from the torture of the fiery furnace. This notion therefore, however plauſible and ingenious it may appear, is yet deſtitute of proof, and without any ſufficient authority or foundation in the word of God.

Not that in heaven or in hell men will be rewarded or puniſhed all alike, but there will be *different degrees* of happineſs or miſery in proportion to their different conduct and behaviour in this world. As nothing is juſter and more equitable in itſelf, ſo nothing is clearer and more demonſtrable from ſcripture. " Shall not the Judge of all the " earth do right," (Gen. XVIII. 25.) in every ſingle inſtance as well as in the general account? It is not only agreeable to the firſt principles of reaſon, but may alſo be confirmed by the moſt expreſs teſtimonies of revelation. With regard to the righteous, the prophet Daniel could ſay (XII. 3.) " They that be wiſe ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the " firmament, and they that turn many to righteouſneſs as the ſtars for " ever and ever." Our Saviour carries the ſimilitude farther, (Matt. XIII. 43.) " Then ſhall the righteous ſhine forth as the ſun in the " kingdom of their father:" ſo that three different degrees of glory are here ſpecified. In like manner St. Paul ſaith, (1 Cor. XV. 41, 42.) " There is one glory of the ſun, and another glory of the moon, " and another glory of the ſtars; for one ſtar differeth from another " ſtar in glory. So alſo is the reſurrection of the dead." The ſame apoſtle ſpeaking of acts of charity and liberality recommends the practice with reſpect to the different recompenſe of reward, (2 Cor. IX. 6.) " He who ſoweth ſparingly ſhall reap alſo ſparingly, and he who ſow-

" eth

" eth bountifully ſhall reap alſo bountifully." The harveſt that a man ſhall reap in the next life will bear proportion to the good ſeed that he ſhall ſow in this. Our bleſſed Saviour himſelf propoſeth different rewards correſpondent to the different degrees of piety and virtue, (Matt. X. 41, 42.) " He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a " prophet ſhall receive a prophet's reward, and he that receiveth a " righteous man in the name of a righteous man ſhall receive a righ- " teous man's reward: And whoſoever ſhall give to drink unto one " of theſe little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a diſ- " ciple, verily I ſay unto you, He ſhall in no wiſe loſe his reward:" Not the leaſt good action ſhall paſs without its reward. In his parable alſo of the pounds, which he deſigned to be prefigurative of the laſt judgment, he obſerves the ſame exact rule of proportion, and (Luke XIX. 16—19.) aſſigns " to him who with his one pound had " gained ten pounds authority over ten cities, and to him who with " his one pound had gained five pounds authority over five cities." With regard to the wicked, as it is ſaid in the book of Wiſdom, (VI. 6.) that " mighty men," it may at leaſt with equal propriety be ſaid, that " mighty" ſinners " ſhall be mightily tormented." Our bleſſed Saviour ſpeaketh of ſome perſons for whom it ſhall be more tolerable in the day of judgment than for others: (Matt. XI. 21—24.) " Woe " unto thee, Chorazin, woe unto thee, Bethſaida, for if the mighty " works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, " they would have repented long ago in ſackcloth and aſhes; But I " ſay unto you, It ſhall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the " day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art " exalted unto heaven, ſhalt be brought down to hell; for if the " mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in So- " dom, it would have remained until this day; But I ſay unto you, " that it ſhall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of " judgment than for thee." The writer of the epiſtle to the Hebrews in like manner declares that offenſes againſt the goſpel ſhall more ſeverely be puniſhed than thoſe committed againſt the law of Moſes: (Heb. X. 28, 29.) " He that deſpiſed Moſes' law died without mercy

" under two or three witneſſes: Of how much ſorer puniſhment, ſup-
" poſe ye, ſhall he be thought worthy, who hath troden under foot
" the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, where-
" with he was ſanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done deſpite
" unto the Spirit of grace?" Our Saviour threateneth different puniſh-ments to the wicked, as he promiſeth different rewards to the righte-ous, greater or leſſer according to the different nature and qualities of their actions: (Luke XII. 47, 48.) " That ſervant which knew his
" lord's will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his
" will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes: But he that knew not, and
" did commit things worthy of ſtripes, ſhall be beaten with few
" ſtripes. For unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall be much
" required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they
" will aſk the more." And he denounceth a heavier woe than others upon hypocritical ſinners: (Matt. XXIII. 14.) " Woe unto you,
" Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrits; for ye devour widows houſes, and
" for a pretence make long prayers, therefore ye ſhall receive the
" greater damnation." It is evident then and undeniable (1 Cor. III. 8. 2 Cor. V. 10.) that " every man ſhall receive his own reward" or puniſhment " according to his own labor, according to that he
" hath done whether it be good or bad." And what a powerful diſ-ſuaſive is this from all manner of ſin and wickedneſs; for (Heb. X. 31.) " It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!" And what a mighty encouragement to " abound" more and more
" in the work of the Lord, (1 Cor. XV. 58.) foraſmuch as ye know," not only " that your labour is not in vain in the Lord," but more-over (2 Pet. I. 11.) that " ſo an entrance ſhall be miniſtered unto you
" abundantly into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour
" Jeſus Chriſt!"

But the greateſt difficulty of all yet remains to be conſidered, which is *the duration* of the happineſs of the bleſſed and of the miſery of the damned. (Matt. XXV. 46.) " And theſe ſhall go away into ever-
" laſting puniſhment, but the righteous into life eternal." That the righteous ſhould be rewarded with everlaſting happineſs is readily ad-mitted;

mitted; it is what every one wiſhes, and what every one therefore eaſily believes: but that the wicked ſhould be puniſhed with eternal miſery is of harder digeſtion; it is not perhaps for mens intereſt that it ſhould be true, and therefore they are willing to hope and believe that it may be falſe. And this article, I believe, hath not only ſtuck with infidels, but hath alſo raiſed ſcruples in the minds of many ſerious Chriſtians. For indeed it is one of the moſt knotty points of divinity, and the hardeſt to be reconciled to our reaſon. Some aſſert in the ſtrongeſt terms the eternity of hell-torments, others as peremptorily deny it: but for my part I cannot entirely approve either the arguments uſually urged in ſupport of this doctrin, or the objections uſually made againſt it. The truth poſſibly may lie in the mid-way between both, neither extend ſo far as the former would carry it, and yet reach farther than the latter will admit. It is very well worth our while to try whether we can inveſtigate it: and for the greater perſpicuity in ſo perplexed a point, we muſt proceed by degrees and diviſions, and under each diviſion advance ſtep by ſtep farther and farther towards eſtabliſhing (what I conceive to be) the truth of the doctrin.

It muſt be taken for granted here, it hath been proved elſewhere, that the ſoul is immaterial, and therefore naturally immortal, and conſequently capable of being made eternally happy or eternally miſerable. Yet ſome men are willing to believe, that the ſouls of the wicked will not be made eternally miſerable, but only *annihilated:* and their condition muſt be very deſperate indeed, and they muſt have a ſad gloomy proſpect before them, when the ſoul that naturally hath a deſire and longing after immortality, can take refuge in the thoughts of annihilation and utter extinction. There is certainly nothing in the nature of the ſoul to make this at all probable: neither is it analagous to the other diſpenſations of divine providence, nor can it be proved by ſimilar inſtances, that the Creator ever deſtroys or utterly aboliſhes any part, and much leſs any intelligent part of his creation. The Almighty doth not create in order to deſtroy, doth not make to unmake again. Matter may be compounded or decompounded, may be condenſed or rarified, and varied and changed into a thouſand different

forms,

forms, but is never annihilated, and much leſs ſpirit which is of a pure ſimple individual eſſence. But they fancy that there are ſome grounds for it in ſcripture, becauſe it is ſaid of the wicked that they "are not," and becauſe they are ſaid to be "deſtroyed" and to "periſh," and becauſe the ſtate of the wicked in the next world is ſometimes called "death" and "the ſecond death," as the ſtate of the righteous is called "life" and "life everlaſting." It is ſaid indeed of the wicked that they "are not," as for inſtance in the Lamentations (V. 7.) "Our "fathers have ſinned and are not;" and the ſame is ſaid of the righteous, as particularly of Enoch, (Gen. V. 24.) "And Enoch walked "with God, and he was not, for God took him:" and ſo if it proveth any thing, it proveth too much, that the righteous will be annihilated as well as the wicked; but in reality it proveth neither the one nor the other, but only that they "are no more in this land of "the living." The wicked are ſaid too to be "deſtroyed" and to "periſh;" but theſe words and others of the like ſignification are uſed not only in ſcripture but in all authors and in all languages to expreſs great miſery, as every one of the leaſt reading muſt have obſerved. It is needleſs, as it would be endleſs, to collect inſtances. That ſingle paſſage in the letter of Tiberius, ſo often quoted from (9) Tacitus, will be ſufficient for our purpoſe. Dii me deæque pejus perdant quem perire quotidie ſentio; 'May all the powers of heaven,' ſays he, 'deſtroy me worſe than I feel myſelf to periſh daily;' where he maketh uſe of both the words to *deſtroy* and to *periſh*, meaning to expreſs the inward agonies and torments of mind under which he labored. And though the ſtate of the wicked in the next world be ſometimes called "death" and the "ſecond death;" yet that nothing of annihilation can be inferred from thence is evident, becauſe it is ſaid (Rev. II. 11.) "He that overcometh ſhall not be hurt of the ſecond "death," ſo that the "ſecond death" is not annihilation but torment. The "ſecond death" was a phraſe among the Jews to expreſs the torments of the damned, and the "lake which burneth with fire and "brimſtone" is expreſly declared to be the "ſecond death," (Rev. XX. 14.)

(9) Taciti Annal. Lib. 6.

14.) " And death and hell were caſt into the lake of fire; this is the " ſecond death:" And (XXI. 8.) " the fearful and unbelieving and " murderers and idolaters and all liers ſhall have their part in the lake " which burneth with fire and brimſtone, which is the ſecond death." So little foundation is there for arguing from ſcripture for the annihilation of the wicked, that the ſcripture plainly intimates the contrary. " Good were it for that man if he had never been born," ſays our Saviour; (Mark XIV. 21.) which though a proverbial ſaying, yet implies that the wicked may have ſomething worſe to expect than annihilation: And again (Matt. X. 15.) " It ſhall be more tolerable for " the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than " for that city;" whereas if the wicked were to be annihilated, it would be as tolerable for one as for another: And again, thoſe texts of " many ſtripes" and of " few ſtripes," of " ſorer puniſhment," of " greater damnation" manifeſtly prove a diverſity of puniſhment; but there can be no diverſity of puniſhment in annihilation, all are then made equal, all are then alike inſenſible.

Since then there are no hopes of annihilation for the wicked, excluſion from bliſs, deprivation of happineſs is the leaſt that they can expect. Nay not only negatively a bare deprivation of happineſs, but alſo poſitively an actual infliction of miſery muſt be their portion: and the queſtion is, How long will this miſery continue? will it abide to all eternity? At leaſt this is plainly denounced in ſcripture. In the XXVth Chapter of St. Matthew our Saviour giveth a ſummary account of the day of judgment, and of the ſentence that he himſelf ſhall pronounce; and he will thus condemn the wicked (ver. 41.) " Depart " from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire prepared for the devil and " his angels;" and as the ſentence is pronounced, ſo will it be executed, for it is added (ver. 46.) " And theſe ſhall go away into ever- " laſting puniſhment." In the IXth Chapter of St. Mark our Saviour thus expreſſeth the torments of the damned, (ver. 44, 46, 48.) " Their " worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;" and this he repeats with peculiar force and emphaſis three times, to impreſs it more ſtrongly on the minds of his hearers. What need after this to quote the authority

thority of St. Paul, who ſaith (2 Theſſ. I. 9.) that "they who do "not obey the goſpel ſhall be puniſhed with everlaſting deſtruction "from the preſence of the Lord?" What need to cite the authority of St. John, who ſaith (Rev. XIV. 11.) that "the ſmoke of their tor-"ment aſcendeth up for ever and ever," and (XX. 10.) "they ſhall "be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

But the words *everlaſting*, *eternal*, *for ever* and the like are ſometimes uſed in a limited ſenſe, and do not always ſignify an endleſs duration; and therefore though the puniſhment of the wicked be called *everlaſting* and *eternal*, yet may it not for all that be of endleſs duration. It is true the words *everlaſting*, *eternal*, *for ever* and the like are ſometimes uſed in a limited ſenſe, and do not always ſignify an endleſs duration; and there are ſufficient inſtances to prove it, eſpecially in the Old Teſtament. But whenever theſe words do not ſignify an endleſs duration, it is becauſe they are applied to things which are only of temporary duration, and manifeſtly and confeſſedly known to be ſuch. When it was injoined in the Jewiſh law (Exod. XXI. 6. Levit. XXV. 54.) that the ſervant ſhould ſerve his maſter "for ever," it was well underſtood that he ſhould only ſerve till "the next jubilee," when all ſervants were to be releaſed and ſet at liberty. When Solomon's temple was called (2 Chron. VI. 2.) "an habitation of God for "ever," this "for ever" was as long as it ſhould be ſtanding, for it was deſtroyed once and again, and not one ſtone left upon another. When our Saviour ſaid to the barren fig-tree, (Matt. XXI. 19.) "Let "no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever;" he could not intend to aſcribe eternity to the fig-tree, but only that never any fruit ſhould grow on it again. When St. Paul wrote to Philemon concerning his ſervant Oneſimus, (ver. 15.) "He therefore departed for a ſeaſon, that "thou ſhouldeſt receive him for ever;" nothing more could be meant than during both their lives. When "Sodom and Gomorrha and the "cities about them" are ſpoken of (Jude 7.) as ſuffering the vengeance "of eternal fire;" the fire continued no longer than till it had reduced them to utter deſtruction. The ſenſe therefore is limited and reſtrained by the nature of the thing; but when the nature of the thing doth not

not limit and reſtrain it, the words ſhould certainly be taken in their proper and genuin ſignification. As when it is ſaid (Exod. XV. 18.) "The Lord ſhall reign for ever and ever:" (Deut. XXXIII. 27.) "The "eternal God is thy refuge:" (Pſal. XC. 2.) "Even from everlaſt-"ing to everlaſting thou art God:" (Heb. XIII. 8.) "Jeſus Chriſt "the ſame yeſterday, and to day, and for ever:" (IX. 14.) "The "eternal Spirit:" (Rev. XIV. 6.) "The everlaſting goſpel:" to which might eaſily be added a great variety of other inſtances. And why then may not the ſame terms be applied in their fulleſt and largeſt ſignification to beings incorruptible and immortal as men will be in another world? If the puniſhment of the wicked is not everlaſting, then neither is the happineſs of the righteous everlaſting; for the ſcripture maketh uſe of the very ſame terms to denote the duration of the one and of the other. If God would have denounced eternal torments to ſinners, how could he have denounced them more poſitively and plainly than he hath done? Are there any words to be found ſtronger than thoſe employed upon this occaſion? And beſides the words *everlaſting* and *eternal* there are other forms of expreſſion, which cannot poſſibly be underſtood in a limited ſenſe or of a temporary duration; as (what we have quoted already) "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not "quenched; the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and "ever;" and "they ſhall be tormented day and night for ever and "ever."

It muſt be then admitted that God hath threatened everlaſting miſery to the wicked as plainly and poſitively as he hath promiſed everlaſting happineſs to the righteous. He hath fairly ſet before us life and death, bleſſing and curſing, eternal happineſs as well as everlaſting miſery, the one to balance the other. Is there any injuſtice in this? Are not the terms and conditions equal? And if men will chooſe curſing rather than bleſſing, and voluntarily incur everlaſting miſery when they might as eaſily attain eternal happineſs, whom have they to complain of, or whom can they arraign of unequal proceeding but themſelves? (Ezek. XVIII. 29.) "Are not my ways equal? Are not "your ways unequal, ſaith the Lord?"

You cannot then complain of injuſtice, for the rewards and puniſhments are equal: and it was really neceſſary that theſe rewards and puniſhments ſhould be declared *everlaſting*. It is of the very nature and eſſence of a law to have the ſanction of rewards and penalties, of rewards for the obſervance and of penalties for the violation of it. A law without them is only a dead letter, and a lawgiver only an empty name. And as there ſhould be rewards and penalties to every law, ſo they ſhould be in ſuch meaſure and proportion as may be ſufficient to recommend and enforce the practice and obſervance of the law. If a leſs reward and penalty will anſwer the end, there is no need to propoſe a greater; but a greater ſhould certainly be propoſed, where a leſs is inſufficient, and is not of force and efficacy enough to determin moral agents. All the laws and commands of God are holy and juſt and good; but yet deſerving as they are in themſelves to be obſerved, I fear they would be but ill obſerved, if they were not backed and enforced by rewards and puniſhments. And would any thing leſs than everlaſting rewards and puniſhments be ſufficient to encourage the good, to deter the bad, and ſecure obedience to the divine commands? You plainly perceive that even theſe are hardly effectual to reſtrain the wickedneſs of mankind; and how then can you complain that God is an arbitrary governor, and annexeth greater penalties to his laws than are neceſſary? With theſe the world is bad enough, and what then would it be without them? If theſe mounds and fences were broken down or taken away, you would ſee wickedneſs like a mighty torrent ruſh in and deluge all.

You cannot then complain that the ſanction of eternal penalties is unreaſonable, for you ſee plainly that it is no more than is abſolutely neceſſary: but poſſibly you may think, though it may be neceſſary in the government of this world for ſuch things to be denounced by God and believed by man, yet there may not be the like neceſſity for inflicting them in the world to come. God is not obliged to execute his threatenings, as he is to make good his promiſes. But why is he not obliged to perform the one as well as the other? His threatenings are never, like thoſe of men, made raſhly, never founded in paſſion

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or caprice, that it ſhould be better not to execute than execute them. (1 Sam. XV. 29.) " The ſtrength of Iſrael will not lie nor repent, " for he is not a man that he ſhould repent." If God will not execute as well as threaten, why doth he threaten at all? It muſt be ſaid, to reclaim the ſinner; and it is allowed that if the ſinner be reclaimed, the end is obtained, and the threatening is voided of courſe: but if the ſinner be not reclaimed, why ſhould not the threatening be then executed, as it was made, in its utmoſt rigor? Is it not more ſuitable to the character of a God of truth, and more becoming the ſimplicity and ſincerity of a divine revelation, to declare the truth and nothing but the truth, and leave it to work upon men as it can, rather than denounce in the moſt ſolemn manner what was never intended, and never ſhall come to paſs, and ſo endevor to alarm men with falſe fears, and to work upon them with falſe perſuaſions, which have nothing in nature to anſwer them? I know it is pretended that God may threaten and not perform; as he threatened deſtruction to the Ninevites, but yet was better than his word, and did not deſtroy them, notwithſtanding the remonſtrances and reproaches of his peeviſh prophet Jonah. But why did not God ſend that deſtruction upon the Ninevites, which he had denounced by his prophet? Was it not becauſe they repented, and by their repentance arreſted the divine judgments? whereas if they had not repented, the ſentence would have been executed upon them, and they would infallibly have been deſtroyed. And ſo likewiſe if ſinners repent, neither will he inflict upon them the puniſhments which he hath denounced in the goſpel; but if they will not repent, why ſhould he not execute upon them the threatenings which they have deſpiſed, and for the very reaſon too becauſe they have deſpiſed them? There is therefore little room to hope, that God will not execute what he hath threatened, unleſs we take care in time to prevent it. This is the only means of eſcaping, there is none other condition or reſervation.

There is then ſufficient reaſon to conclude, that God will fully execute his threatenings as well as make good his promiſes, and the rewards and puniſhments conſequent thereupon will be really and truly

everlaſting. " The wicked ſhall go away into everlaſting fire, but " the righteous into life eternal:" and as long as they retain the ſame qualities, ſo long will they keep the ſame ſtation; as long as they continue righteous or wicked, ſo long they will alſo remain happy or miſerable, even to all eternity. But put the caſe, that the righteous ſhould fall from his righteouſneſs and commit iniquity, ſhould he continue ſtill in glory, ſhould you think him intitled to the ſame privileges and advantages, or rather ſhould you not think that he had juſtly forfeited all pretenſions to happineſs? On the other hand if the wicked ſhould turn away from his wickedneſs and do that which is lawful and right, ſhould he continue ſtill in torment, ſhould not his iniquity be forgiven and his ſin be remembred no more, ſhould he not ſave his ſoul alive and be plucked as a fire-brand out of the fire? This I conceive to be the true notion and repreſentation of the eternity of rewards and puniſhments. Righteouſneſs will be for ever happy and glorified, wickedneſs will be for ever miſerable and tormented; but if righteouſneſs ſhould degenerate and become wickedneſs, or if wickedneſs ſhould amend and become righteouſneſs, the tables would then be turned, and with the change of their nature their ſtate and condition would be changed too.

But it is commonly ſuppoſed, that in the next life there can be no ſuch changes; every man's condition there is fixed and unalterable; (Eccleſ. XI. 3.) " in the place where the tree falleth, there ſhall it " be;" (Rev. XXII. 11.) " he that is unjuſt" will be " unjuſt ſtill, " and he that is filthy" will be " filthy ſtill, and he that is righteous" will be " righteous ſtill, and he that is holy" will be " holy ſtill." But notwithſtanding the application of certain texts to this purpoſe which have no ſuch meaning, this opinion ſeemeth to be without any real foundation in ſcripture, or in the nature and reaſon of things. To ſuppoſe that a man's happineſs or miſery to all eternity ſhould abſolutely and unchangeably be fixed and determined by the uncertain behaviour of a few years in this life is a ſuppoſition even more unreaſonable and unnatural, than that a man's mind and manners ſhould be completely formed and faſhioned in his cradle, and his whole future fortune

tune and condition ſhould depend altogether upon his infancy, infancy being much greater in proportion to the few years of this life, than the whole of this life to eternity. This life is indeed a ſtate of trial, but not a trial to fix our fate for ever, without any poſſibility of changing for better or for worſe in the world to come. For if the righteous can be but righteous, and the wicked can be but wicked, and cannot act otherwiſe; there is an utter end of all freedom of will and morality of action. Their virtue ceaſes to be virtue, and their ſin is no longer ſin. Here it is admitted that we are free moral agents, and feel and enjoy our liberty; and ſhall we be deprived of this privilege hereafter, and be bound in the chains of fatal neceſſity? It is moſt probable indeed, that the righteous, living in ſo much greater light and knowlege, enjoying ſo many bleſſings, and ſurrounded by ſo many good examples, will lie under little or no temptation to fall from his righteouſneſs; but however the thing is poſſible; for no creatures of any rank or order, of any time or place, are abſolutely infallible and impeccable. Perfect holineſs belongeth to God alone. The ſcripture aſſures us, that in the next life men will be made (Luke XX. 36.) "equal unto the angels;" but angels we know have apoſtatized and fallen, and why then may not men even when made "equal unto the "angels?" For the ſame reaſon that the righteous may fall from his righteouſneſs, the wicked may turn away from his wickedneſs; and this event appears much more probable than the other. For he is certainly under no neceſſity to the contrary, he is free to return and repent; and though it may be a matter of ſome difficulty, yet there is no real impoſſibility. If it were impoſſible for him to repent and reform, he would be no longer criminal, and his puniſhment would be really unjuſt.

Repentance therefore is not impoſſible even in hell; but yet you may aſk What reaſon is there to think it probable? and I anſwer, Becauſe it is impoſſible for any creature to live in eternal torments. (Iſa. XXXIII. 14.) "Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? who among "us can dwell with everlaſting burnings?" If nothing elſe, yet his own ſenſations and feelings muſt bring him one time or other to an acknowlegement

knowlegement of his ſin and of his duty. In the next world too there will be no room for ſcepticiſm and infidelity. "The devils" are ſaid now to "believe and tremble;" (James II. 19.) but in the next world both men and devils will do more than "believe and tremble;" they muſt, whether they will or not, be convinced by ocular demonſtration, by all their ſenſes, by all their feelings inward and outward, of the glory and dominion, of the righteouſneſs and juſtice, of the power and terrors of the Almighty; and muſt ſee and feel and know how "hard "it is to kick againſt the pricks," how impoſſible to reſiſt his will, or to flee from his vengeance. Beſides in the next world their capacities will not only be inlarged and improved, but they will not lie under the ſame temptations as in theſe frail periſhing fleſhly tabernacles; there will not be the like provocatives to ſin in their incorruptible immortal ſpiritual bodies. Their ſenſes will all be quicker, and conſequently their pains and ſufferings will be greater, and their miſery more inſupportable. Inveterate habits are indeed rooted out with extreme difficulty; "the leopard" may almoſt as ſoon "change his ſpots;" but ſurely it is eaſier and better "to cut off a right hand," or to "pluck "out a right eye," than with the whole body to lie groveling for ever in "hell-fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." There are tempers and ſpirits, which inſtead of being ſoftened and melted, are rather hardened and petrified, as I may ſay, by calamities and afflictions. Some ſuch inſtances may occur in this life, or for a ſhort period of time: but what is the period of human life, or hundreds of years, or thouſands, or millions, or millions of millions compared with eternity? As no creature is completely and abſolutely good, ſo neither is any completely and abſolutely evil; there is a mixture more or leſs of good and bad, of gold and droſs, in every one: but the fire muſt in time purge away and conſume the droſs, and leave only the gold behind. No creature can be ſo totally depraved and abandoned, as to hold out, under the moſt exquiſit tortures, obſtinate and obdurate unto all eternity. Some may perſiſt for a longer, ſome for a ſhorter term; but in the end all muſt be ſubdued, ſo that their puniſhment may more properly be called *indefinite* than *infinite.* In ſhort,

ſhort, if they have any ſenſe or feeling, any reaſon or underſtanding, any choice or free will, they muſt one time or other, ſooner or later, be brought to repentance: if they have none of theſe, they are no better than ſtocks or ſtones, and as they cannot deſerve, ſo neither can they ſuffer, any puniſhment.

For what end or purpoſe is it to be ſuppoſed, that God ever puniſheth any of his creatures? For ſome good end without doubt: and you cannot well aſſign any other or better than theſe two reaſons, for the correction of the offender, and for an example to others. If the offender be corrected and reformed, the firſt end is fully anſwered, and the puniſhment ſhould ceaſe of courſe. If he ſtill remain incorrigible, it is fitting that the puniſhment ſhould be continued and increaſed, till it have the due effect. The other end of puniſhing for example's ſake may alſo be of uſe and ſervice, as long as there are any to be influenced by it: but after this world and all the works therein ſhall be diſſolved, after the general judgment and the different allotments of men and angels, what creatures will remain to whom it may ſerve for a warning, eſpecially if every one's condition ſhall be fixed by fate, unalterably good or unalterably evil. It cannot conſiſt with the mercy, or the goodneſs, or the wiſdom, or even the juſtice of the ſupreme Being, to puniſh any of his creatures for no end or purpoſe, neither for their own correction, nor for a warning to others. A Moloch may be pleaſed with the ſacrifice of innocents burning in the fire; a God of the Manichees may delight in evil for the ſake of evil: but ſuch things cannot be conceived without horror, of the God of the Chriſtians. It is juſt, and wiſe, and good, and even merciful, to correct a ſinner as long as he deſerves correction, to chaſtiſe him into a ſenſe of his guilt, to whip and ſcourge him as I may ſay out of his faults, if many ſtripes will not ſuffice to lay on more, to heap coals of fire upon his head, and melt him down into another nature and temper, ſo that he may be made capable of forgiveneſs. Such ſeverity is the greateſt mercy: and how wretched, in the moſt favorable view, muſt be the condition of ſinners? What fruit can they have in thoſe things, whereof if they are not now, they will be then aſhamed? How muſt they

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lament and bewail, how deteſt and abominate the conſequences of their own folly and madneſs, which have reduced them to ſuch ſtraits and difficulties? What pangs muſt they undergo, before the new birth can be accompliſhed in them? yea "what carefulneſs, yea "what clearing of themſelves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, "yea what vehement deſire, yea what zeal, yea what revenge?" But any thing is eaſier and better than to live for ever in torments. Tortures upon tortures, tortures without end, no creatures of the leaſt ſenſe or feeling can ſupport; but muſt all be brought to ſubmiſſion at laſt: and had they not much better make a virtue of neceſſity? Thrice happy are they who need no ſuch repentance; next happy are they who repent in time, and are reformed in this life; they are miſerable if they defer it, and the longer they defer it, the more wretched ſtill and miſerable they will be, and the harder to be reclaimed.

But that which weigheth moſt in this caſe, is the conſideration of the divine attributes and perfections. Such a being as God cannot be ſuppoſed to have produced any intelligent natures, for any other end or with any other deſign, than to conſtitute them all in their different degrees and proportions partakers of his goodneſs and happineſs. It could never be his original intention to make any of his creatures, and much leſs the greater part of mankind as you ſuppoſe, for ever miſerable. "He would have all men to be ſaved;" and whence then ariſeth the obſtruction to his good will and pleaſure, or how cometh it to paſs that his gracious purpoſes are ever defeated? Was it for want of wiſdom or power to fit and make them able, or was there any defect of mercy and goodneſs to diſpoſe and make them willing, to acquire everlaſting life? No, you will ſay juſtly, the fault is entirely in the creatures, and not at all in the creator. (Eccleſ. VII. 29.) "God "hath made man upright, but they have ſought out many inventions." He made them capable of happineſs, but they themſelves are the authors of their own miſery. But (Acts XV. 18.) "known unto God "are all his works from the beginning of the world." He foreſees the moſt diſtant and contingent actions of all his creatures. He foreknows what courſes they will take, their beginning, their progreſs, their

their end: And nothing can be more contrariant to the divine nature and attributes, than for a God all-wiſe all-powerful all-good all-perfect to beſtow exiſtence on any beings, whoſe deſtiny, he foreſees and foreknows, muſt terminate in wretchedneſs and miſery, without recovery or remedy, without reſpit or end. He certainly would either have created them of a different model and conſtitution, or not have created them at all. "God is love;" and he would rather not have given life, than render that life a torment and curſe to all eternity. Man indeed muſt have been made a free rational moral agent, or otherwiſe he could not have been capable of good or evil, of reward or puniſhment: and it is as juſt and reaſonable and fitting that he ſhould be puniſhed for his evil actions, as that he ſhould be rewarded for his good ones. But God never inflicts puniſhment merely for puniſhment's ſake. In the midſt of judgment he remembers mercy. His chaſtiſements, like thoſe of a loving father, are deſigned not to harden men in ſin, but to recover them to goodneſs, to correct and meliorate their nature, to terrify, to compel, to perſuade, to oblige, and at length to bring them to repentance and reformation. His goodneſs could never give birth to any one being, and much leſs to a number of beings, whoſe end, he foreſaw and could not but foreſee, would be irretrievable miſery; nor could even his juſtice for ſhort-lived tranſgreſſions inflict everlaſting puniſhments. Imagin a creature, nay imagin numberleſs creatures, produced out of nothing and therefore guilty of no prior offenſe, ſent into this world of frailty, which it is well known beforehand they will ſo uſe as to abuſe it, and then for the exceſſes of a few years delivered over to torments of endleſs ages, without the leaſt hope or poſſibility of relaxation or redemption. Imagin it you may, but you can never ſeriouſly believe it, nor reconcile it to God and goodneſs. The thought is ſhocking even to human nature, and how much more abhorrent then muſt it be from the divine perfections! God muſt have made all his creatures finally to be happy; he could never make any, whoſe end he foreknew would be miſery everlaſting.

But poſſibly you may object, that by this ſame method of arguing it would follow that the devil and his angels will at laſt be ſaved as well as wicked men: and I cannot deny the conſequence, which extends alike to all free intelligent rational moral agents whatever. But as wicked men cannot be ſaved as long as they continue wicked; ſo neither can the devil and his angels, till they ceaſe to be devils, and new minds and new manners be formed in them. We know (Matt. XXV. 41.) that "everlaſting fire is prepared for the devil and his angels:" but they are not yet conſigned to their place of torment; and therefore we find them in the goſpels (Luke VIII. 31. Matt. VIII. 29.) beſeeching our Saviour, that "he would not command them to go out "into the deep," and "torment them before the time." They are fallen from "their firſt eſtate (Jude ver. 6.) their own habitation" in heaven; and their preſent abode is in the region of the air, from whence their chieftain is ſtiled (Eph. II. 2.) "the prince of the power "of the air," and they are called (VI. 12.) "ſpiritual wickedneſs" or "wicked ſpirits in high" or "heavenly places," εν τοις επουρανιοις, or as ſome would read εν τοις ὑπουρανιοις, "in places under heaven." Here they are "reſerved (2 Pet. II. 4. Jude ver. 6.) unto the judgment of "the great day;" and then (Rev. XX. 10.) "they ſhall be caſt into "the lake of fire and brimſtone, and ſhall be tormented day and night "for ever and ever." But how then, you may perhaps ſay, can they be extricated from thence? For it doth not appear, that the Redeemer of fallen man hath undertaken alſo to be the Saviour of the fallen angels. On the contrary it is ſaid (Heb. II. 16.) "He took not on him "the nature of angels, but he took on him the ſeed of Abraham;" or as the text is rendered in the margin, "He taketh not hold of an-"gels, but of the ſeed of Abraham he taketh hold." The difference between the two caſes I conceive to conſiſt briefly in this. Man was deceived, the devil was the deceiver. Man's therefore was a caſe more deſerving of compaſſion; and for us men and for our ſalvation Chriſt came down from heaven. The like regard was not had to the firſt tranſgreſſors, but "everlaſting fire was prepared for the devil and his "angels." Men by the merits of their Redeemer may eſcape the pains of

of hell; and many of them, it is to be hoped, will eſcape them; but the devil and his angels will, all without exception, "be caſt into the "lake of fire and brimſtone, and be tormented day and night for ever "and ever." How long they will ſtand or be able to ſtand under theſe torments, it is more than we can pretend to divine; but as their offenſe was greater, and their rebellion worſe than that of men, ſo their puniſhment will be ſeverer in proportion. But then on the other hand they enjoy many ſuperior advantages, quicker ſenſations, brighter intellects, more comprehenſive underſtandings, and more excellent talents and faculties of every kind; and if they now "believe and trem-"ble," as the apoſtle ſaith, (James II. 19.) what compunction muſt they feel, when they ſhall actually ſuffer thoſe torments, which they dread ſo much at preſent! Time and torments, and much more an eternity of torments, muſt overcome the proudeſt ſpirit: and the devil himſelf muſt at laſt be ſubdued and ſubmit; and in the end there will be a regeneration and reſtoration of all creatures to the happineſs, for which they were orginally intended.

This doctrin may perhaps be cenſured as novel and modern; but antiquity is not always a certain meaſure of truth, and ſome notions of ſuch a general reſtoration have been entertained in former as well as in later times. A treatiſe was publiſhed in 1761, intitled *Univerſal Reſtitution a Scripture Doctrin*; which I wiſh had been written with ſuch clearneſs and perſpicuity as to have rendered this diſcourſe unneceſſary. In this treatiſe a memorable quotation is made from Sophocles, but without any reference to the place from whence it is taken; which as my memory hath not ſerved me to recollect, ſo neither hath the moſt diligent ſearch enabled me to find out. Authors ſhould in juſtice to themſelves as well as their readers be more careful and correct in their quotations, eſpecially when they allege them in proof of any particular point in queſtion. The ſenſe of the paſſage is to this effect (1). 'For 'we think that in Hades or the inviſible ſtate there are two paths, one 'the way of the juſt, and the other of the unjuſt.'—And afterwards

(1) Και γαρ καθ' αδην δυο τριβας νομιζομεν
Μιαν δικαιων, χαιτεραν αδικων οδον——
Καπειτα σωσει παντθ' ὰ προσθ' απωλεσεν.
Univerſ. Reſtitut. p. 46.

'God will ſave all things which before he had deſtroyed.' Simplicius, who hath written a comment upon the little manual of Epictetus, aſcribes ſo much virtue and efficacy to his precepts, as to declare (2) that if any one is not moved and affected by theſe diſcourſes, he can be corrected and ſet right only by the torments of hell. But this notion is not peculiar to ſome Greek poets and philoſophers; it hath prevailed more among the Chriſtian fathers and Hebrew doctors: but indeed the main authorities, and only competent authorities, are to be derived from Scripture.

Of the ſentiments of the Hebrew doctors we have ſome account in a Latin treatiſe *Of the ſtate of the dead*, written by Dr. Windet a learned phyſician in the time of Charles II. In this caſe as well as in others you will find (3) therein ſome doctors affirming and others denying; but our buſineſs is with thoſe only who are for mitigating the ſeverity of endleſs torments. Rabbi Moſes Almoſny is cited for ſaying, 'Meaſure for meaſure; if any one ſhall greatly offend, he ſhall be greatly puniſhed, yet afterwards he ſhall obtain his reſt.' R. Iſaac Ben Arama aſſerts much the ſame thing in his commentary upon the Penteteuch. R. Jacob Chavif ſcruples not to ſay, 'Some there are who after they have ſuffered puniſhment in hell, ſhall perhaps be thought worthy of the life of the world to come;' and he refers to ſome paſſages in the Pſalms in ſupport of his aſſertion. R. Menachem expounding 1 Sam. XXV. 29. conceives it to relate to the future conditions of the righteous and the wicked, and concludes of the wicked that 'they ſhall be kept in chains till the time of their delivery ſhall come.' In another place ſpeaking of the lower hell, he declares that 'the wicked ſhall remain there till their ſpots and ſtains are waſhed and cleanſed away.' And in the apocryphal book of Enoch expreſs mention is made of 'the finiſhing of everlaſting puniſhment;' but that cannot be finiſhed, which is truly and properly everlaſting.

Of the Chriſtian fathers the moſt celebrated patron of this doctrin was the learned Origen, the preſbyter of Alexandria, the greateſt ſcholar and ableſt writer in the third century after Chriſt: And the learned

(2) Simplicii Procem. in Epict. Enchiridion. (3) Windet de Vita functorum ſtatu, Sect. 9.

reader

reader may ſave himſelf the trouble of collecting his ſentiments from the different parts of his works, by having recourſe to Monſ. Huet's *Origeniana*, wherein he may find a very ample and accurate account of the life, and the doctrins, and the writings of this eminent father. In treating of his doctrins he employs (4) a whole diſſertation on his notions of puniſhments and rewards, and particularly whether and how he thought that an end would be put to the torments of the damned, and all things by reſtoration would become one in God. The firſt place occurs in the ſeventh homily on Leviticus, in which diſcourſing how the Son can be ſaid to be ſubject to the Father he aſſerts, that 'when 'the Son ſhall have conſummated his work, and ſhall have brought 'his whole creation to the highth of perfection, then he himſelf ſhall 'be ſubject to the Father, that God may be all in all.' He ſubjoins, 'that Chriſt ſhall then drink wine in the kingdom of God, when all 'things ſhall be ſubjected to him, and all being ſaved, and the power 'of death being deſtroyed, there ſhall be no more ſacrifice for ſin.' This ſubjection he explains after the ſame manner in his third book *of principles*; and infers that 'as when the Son is ſaid to be ſubject to the 'Father, the perfect reſtitution of every creature is declared; ſo when 'the enemies of God are ſaid to be ſubjected to the Son, the ſalvation 'of the ſubjected is underſtood by it, and the reparation of thoſe who 'were deſtroyed and loſt.' A more illuſtrious proof is produced out of his firſt book *of principles* from theſe texts of ſcripture, (Pſal. CX. 1.) "The Lord ſaid unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until "I make thine enemies thy footſtool," and (1 Cor. XV. 24, 25.) "Then cometh the end, when he ſhall have delivered up the king-"dom to God even the Father, when he ſhall have put down all rule "and all authority and power, For he muſt reign till he hath put all "enemies under his feet." From theſe teſtimonies of ſcripture he proveth, that the enemies of Chriſt being ſubdued, the goodneſs of God will recall every creature into one by the Son; by "ſubjection" meaning that by which adhering to Chriſt we are made holy and obtain ſalvation. Afterwards he demonſtrates that all things will be reſtored

(4) Huetii Origeniana, Lib. 2. Quæſt. 11. Sect. 16, &c.

into

into one from this of Chriſt, (John XVII. 21, 22, 23.) " That they " all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they " alſo may be one in us; And the glory which thou gaveſt me I have " given them, that they may be one, even as we are one; I in them, " and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;" and from that of St. Paul, (Eph. IV. 13.) " Till we all come in the unity of the " faith, and of the knowlege of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, " unto the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt;" nor will the devils themſelves be deprived of the benefit of this reſtitution. He conſidered the fire of hell as expiatory and temporary, in which the ſins of men were to be burnt and purged away; and in his eighth book on the Epiſtle to the Romans he ſays, ' But for how long a time this ' purgation by fire may be applied, and for how many ages it may tor- ' ture ſinners, he alone can know to whom the Father hath com- ' mitted all judgment.' Several other paſſages are cited to the ſame effect; but theſe are ſufficient ſpecimens of the learned father's ſentiments on this particular point of doctrin. Dr. Cave in his life of Origen Sect. 26. mentions as publiſhed in 1661 4to, *A letter of reſolution concerning Origen and the chief of his opinions*; where the reader, as the Doctor ſays, ' will find the moſt obnoxious of his dogmata reck- ' oned up, and the apologies and defenſes which a ſincere lover of Ori- ' gen might be ſuppoſed to make in his behalf; and theſe pleas re- ' preſented with all the advantages with which wit reaſon and elo- ' quence could ſet them off:' but of this work I have only ſeen ſome extracts, I have not met with the book itſelf. A man, who could as Origen did make himſelf an eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's ſake, we muſt ſuppoſe, was much in earneſt, and very ſincere in his profeſſions.

Monſ. Huet, though a member and prelate of the Gallican church, yet not only repreſents Origen's opinions with great fairneſs and candor, but likewiſe in ſome meaſure excuſes and juſtifies him by (5) producing paſſages not very diſſimilar from other ancient fathers. He begins with Juſtin Martyr in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew affirming,

(5) Orig. ibid. Sect. 25.

that

that ‘ at the time of judgment thoſe ſouls which appear worthy of ‘ God ſhall die no more, but the reſt ſhall be puniſhed as long as ‘ God ſhall pleaſe to continue their exiſtence and their puniſhment.’ Juſtin imagined therefore that a time might come when their puniſhment might ceaſe. Irenæus is alſo cited for holding much the ſame doctrin. Gregory Nazianzen in his 39th Oration threatens the heretics with undergoing a difficult and long baptiſm of fire, unleſs they depart from their hereſy, by which fire all wickedneſs like ſo much ſtubble will be burnt out of them. In the following Oration he doubts whether the torments of the damned will be everlaſting, or whether it will not be more humane and worthy of God to ſhorten them. Gregory Nyſſen without any doubting embraces the opinion of Origen in his diſcourſe of the ſoul and the reſurrection, in which he declares that the ſouls of men and devils alſo ſhall in time to come, laying aſide all their vitioſity, confeſs Chriſt: and in another place of the ſame diſſertation he aſſerts, that God cannot otherwiſe be “ all in all,” according to the ſaying of the apoſtle, than by deſtroying utterly and extirpating all wickedneſs. Moreover in his Catechetical Oration, Chap. 8. he affirms that after this life the evil affections of the mind ſhall be cured by God, which in this life could not be healed by virtue: then Chap. 26. he teaches that not only wicked and impious men, but even the devil the author of ſin ſhall be affected by the kindneſs of the Son of God, and be ſo purged and purified, as gold is refined by the fire, the baſer matter being extracted and ſeparated; and at length after a long courſe of time, all the evil that is in nature being conſumed, the damned ſhall be reſtored whole and entire, that with one mouth all created things may return thanks to God.

We may farther add what Dr. Burnet of the Charterhouſe (6) hath cited from St. Jerome, who though ſharp and vehement in his own nature, and a ſevere bitter enemy to Origen and his opinions, yet upon this topic expreſſeth himſelf with uncommon temper and moderation. In the concluſion of his commentary upon the prophet Iſaiah, ſpeaking of everlaſting puniſhments, and of thoſe who thought that

(6) Burnet de Statu mortuorum et reſurgentium, Cap. 10.

after

after a long period of time an end would be put to them, he concludes that ‘ we muſt leave theſe things to the wiſdom of God, whoſe judg-
‘ ments as well as mercies are diſtributed in exact weight and propor-
‘ tion, and who knoweth whom, and how, and how long, he ought
‘ to puniſh.’ He had aſſerted ſomething of the ſame kind before in his commentary upon the XXIVth Chapter near the end, ‘ We muſt
‘ know that human weakneſs cannot comprehend the judgment of
‘ God, nor determin any thing concerning the magnitude and mea-
‘ ſure of puniſhments, which muſt be left to the wiſdom of God alone:’ and in his commentary upon the IVth Chapter to the Galatians we find him ſaying, that ‘ no reaſonable creature can periſh with God for
‘ ever.’ St. Auſtin, though a ſtrenuous advocate for the eternity of puniſhments, denominates thoſe of the contrary opinion *merciful* doctors, and therefore he and thoſe who think with him, as Dr. Burnet obſerves, may by the rule of oppoſits be called *unmerciful* doctors. Several of the ancient fathers conceived the fire of hell to be πυρ καθαρσιον a purging as well as κολαστηριον a penal fire, and conſequently ſome time or other to have an end: but this penal purging fire is very different from the purgatory of the Church of Rome; for that is not once mentioned in ſcripture, but this is often repeated; that occupies the interval between death and the reſurrection, but this ſucceeds after the general judgment.

I forbear to produce any modern authorities, though perhaps the modern may be as good or better than the ancient; but all authorities muſt bow down before ſcripture, this is the only ſolid foundation of faith, this is the only ſure anchor of hope. The letter of ſcripture may indeed ſound forth everlaſting puniſhments, but the ſpirit of ſcripture intimates the contrary. How the letter is to be underſtood, and in what ſenſe the puniſhments are everlaſting, we have already explained; and this explanation will be moſt amply confirmed by the whole ſtrain and tenor of ſcripture, which breathes nothing but mercy and kindneſs, pity and forgiveneſs to the ſons of men. Texts innumerable might be cited and applied to this purpoſe, but weight is more to be regarded than number. Even in the Moſaical law the Lord proclaimes

claimes himſelf, (Exod. XXXIV. 6, 7.) "The Lord, the Lord God, "merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and "truth, keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity and tranſ-"greſſion and ſin:" But how can ſuch attributes conſiſt with a ſyſtem of irrevocable vengeance for thouſands, tranſgreſſions never to be forgiven, and torments never to have an end?—In like manner the pſalmiſt declares, (CIII. 8, 9.) "The Lord is merciful and gracious, ſlow "to anger, and plenteous in mercy; He will not always chide, nei-"ther will he keep his anger for ever:" And may we not then with juſtice apply the words of another pſalm, (LXXXV. 5, 6.) "Wilt "thou be angry with us for ever? wilt thou draw out thine anger to "all generations? Wilt thou not receive us again, that thy people "may rejoice in thee?"—God doth not willingly grieve and afflict the children of men; and therefore it is called by the prophet Iſaiah (XXVIII. 21.) "his ſtrange work, his ſtrange act," as if it was very uncommon and foreign to his nature: But with what propriety can that be denominated "his ſtrange work, his ſtrange act," which is wrought not in a few, but in abundance of inſtances, and is to continue not for a ſhort period of time, but throughout all generations?—"As I live, ſaith the Lord God," by the prophet Ezekiel, (XXXIII. 11.) "I have no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that the "wicked turn from his way, and live:" And can it be his will and pleaſure that no wicked man ſhould periſh, but repent and live; and yet be his will and pleaſure, that ſo many of his creatures ſhould be reduced to a ſtate of final impenitence, where they cannot turn and live, but muſt periſh everlaſtingly?

But the great charter of univerſal redemption is the goſpel, which will be found in the end what it was proclaimed in the beginning, (Luke II. 14.) "Glory to God in the higheſt, and on earth peace, "good will towards men:" But what glory to God, to ſee a number of his creatures plunged in the depth of miſery? what good will towards men, to conſign ſo many of them to everlaſting puniſhments?—Our bleſſed Lord in ſaying (Matt. V. 26.) "Thou ſhalt by no "means come out thence" (out of priſon) "till thou haſt paid the

" uttermoſt farthing," and (XVIII. 34.) " his lord was wroth, and " delivered him to the tormentors, till he ſhould pay all that was due " unto him," ſufficiently implies, that ſome time or other ſatisfaction may be made, the debts of ſin be diſcharged, and the ſinner himſelf releaſed out of priſon.—It is the declared end and purpoſe of our bleſſed Saviour's coming into the world to recover and to redeem loſt mankind. " The Son of man," as he ſaith himſelf, (Luke XIX. 10.) " is come to ſeek and to ſave that which was loſt." And ſhall the purpoſe of his coming be ſo far fruſtrated and defeated, as that the greater part of thoſe whom he came to ſeek and to ſave ſhall be loſt and undone for ever?—How often is he ſtiled " the Saviour of the " world" in the full extent and meaning of the words! (John III. 17.) " God ſent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but " that the world through him might be ſaved:" (1 John IV. 14.) " We have ſeen and do teſtify that the Father ſent the Son to be the " Saviour of the world:" (1 Tim. II. 4.) " God will have all men " to be ſaved, and to come unto the knowlege of the truth:" (IV. 10.) " He is the Saviour of all men, eſpecially of thoſe that believe:" (2 Pet. III. 9.) " He is not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that " all ſhould come to repentance:" (1 John II. 1, 2.) " We have an " advocate with the Father, Jeſus Chriſt the righteous, and he is the " propitiation for our ſins, and not for ours only, but alſo for the " ſins of the whole world:" (Luke III. 6.) " And all fleſh ſhall ſee " the ſalvation of God:" And after ſo many gracious promiſes and aſſurances of univerſal ſalvation, is he the Saviour of the world only intentionally, and not effectually; or is he to ſave only the choſen few, and to leave the many under eternal condemnation?—His very enemies are reconciled to God by the merits and ſufferings of his beloved Son. (Rom. V. 10.) " When we were enemies we were reconciled " to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we " ſhall be ſaved by his life:" (2 Cor. V. 19.) " God was in Chriſt " reconciling the world unto himſelf, not imputing their treſpaſſes " unto them:" (Col. I. 19, &c.) " For it pleaſed the Father that in " him ſhould all fulneſs dwell; And having made peace through the

" blood

" blood of his croſs, by him to reconcile all things unto himſelf, by " him, I ſay, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven; " And you, that were ſometime alienated and enemies in your mind " by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled, in the body of his " fleſh through death, to preſent you holy and unblameable and un- " reproveable in his ſight:" (Rom. XI. 32.) " God hath concluded " all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all:" But what kind of peace and reconciliation is that, where they ſtill live in open enmity and are treated as enemies, where vengeance ſtill purſues them, and their miſery has no end?—For the reward of his ſufferings God hath highly exalted his Son, and (Eph. I. 20, &c.) " ſet him at his " own right-hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and " power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, " not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come, and put all " things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things " to the church, which is his body, the fulneſs of him that filleth all " in all:" But he can never attain theſe glorious ends, he can never be " far above all principality and power," or " be head over all," or " fill all in all," as long as there are evil angels and evil men, who are in rebellion againſt him, and to their utmoſt power reſiſt and oppoſe his will.—(1 John III. 8.) " For this purpoſe the Son of God " was manifeſted that he might deſtroy the works of the devil:" But " the works of the devil" cannot be ſaid with truth to be " deſtroyed," as long as any wickedneſs ſubſiſts in the world.—It is repeated again and again that he muſt " put all things under his feet:" but the ſubjection of intelligent creatures conſiſts not in their being kept under by ſuperior force and violence, but in the change of their affections and the ſubmiſſion of their wills, (2 Cor. X. 5.) " caſting down ima- " ginations, and every high thing that exalteth itſelf againſt the know- " lege of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obe- " dience of Chriſt." In this manner muſt all creatures bow down to him, and acknowlege him, before the end come. (Philip. II. 10, 11.) " At the name of Jeſus every knee ſhall bow, of things in heaven, " and things in earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue

" ſhall confeſs that Jeſus Chriſt is Lord, to the glory of God the Fa-
" ther." " And (Rev. V. 13.) every creature which is in heaven,
" and on the earth, and under the earth, and ſuch as are in the ſea,
" and all that are in them, heard I, ſaying Bleſſing and honor and
" glory and power be unto Him that ſitteth upon the throne, and
" unto the Lamb for ever and ever." As he was the Creator, ſo he will be the Saviour of all beings. For (John I. 3.) " all things were
" made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was
" made." (Col. I. 16, 17.) " By him were all things created that
" are in heaven, and that are in earth, viſible and inviſible, whether
" they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all
" things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things,
" and by him all things conſiſt:" And we may be certain, that He who made the world will not ſuffer it to remain in eternal diſorder, but will rectify and reſtore his own creation. " For he muſt reign
" (1 Cor. XV. 25, 26.) till he hath put all enemies under his feet:
" The laſt enemy that ſhall be deſtroyed is death." The death here intended is " the ſecond death." For (Rev. XX. 14.) " death and
" hell" or hades " were caſt into the lake of fire; this is the ſecond
" death:" and (ver. 10.) " the devil and the beaſt and the falſe pro-
" phet were caſt into the lake of fire and brimſtone;" and (XXI. 8.)
" the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers,
" and whoremongers, and ſorcerers, and idolaters, and all liers ſhall
" have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimſtone,
" which is the ſecond death." It muſt be this " ſecond death" therefore, that after ſubduing all other enemies and bringing them to ſubmiſſion, ſhall itſelf at laſt be deſtroyed. When this penal and purging and purifying fire ſhall have accompliſhed the purpoſes for which it was intended, it ſhall be totally extinguiſhed; and as there will be no more any creatures to be puniſhed, ſo there will be no more any place of puniſhment. Then in the fulleſt ſenſe (1 Cor. XV. 54.) " ſhall be
" brought to paſs the ſaying that is written, Death is ſwallowed up in
" victory;" and (Rev. XXI. 4.) " there ſhall be no more death."
" Then cometh the end, (1 Cor. XV. 24, 28.) when he ſhall
" have

" have delivered up the kingdom to God even the Father, when he " ſhall have put down all rule and all authority and power; And " when all things ſhall be ſubdued unto him, then ſhall the Son alſo " himſelf be ſubject unto him that put all things under him, that " God may be all in all." When all things ſhall thus " be made per- " fect in one" according to his prayer, (John XVII. 23.) then his mediatorial kingdom ſhall ceaſe, but he ſhall reign as God for ever and ever (ver. 5.) " in the glory which he had with the Father before " the world was."

After all, whatever our reaſonings may be, (Gen. XVIII. 25.) " the " judge of all the earth will do right." Upon every ſuppoſition a life of ſin muſt be the highth of folly and madneſs, be the puniſhment of the wicked for an indefinite time or for infinity. God indeed is not extreme to mark what is done amiſs; he maketh favorable allowances for the frailties and infirmities of human nature; he doth not exact from us a perfect and ſinleſs obedience: he only requires us to exert our beſt endevors, and the merits of our Saviour will atone for the reſt. And after a man hath ſinned ever ſo notoriouſly, yet if he will but return and repent, our heavenly Father will receive the returning prodigal, and embrace him with the arms of his mercy. Can we deſire to ſerve upon eaſier terms? But God muſt be juſt as well as merciful. He can never exerciſe one of his attributes ſo as to claſh or interfere with another. (Job XXXIV. 10, 11.) " Far be it from " God that he ſhould do wickedneſs, and from the Almighty that " he ſhould commit iniquity; For the work of a man ſhall he render " unto him, and cauſe every man to find according to his ways." Be ſatisfied, He will not puniſh any one more than he deſerves, or more than is conſiſtent with infinite juſtice and infinite mercy too. He will manifeſt the righteouſneſs of his judgments in the ſight of men and angels; and even they who ſhall be condemned, ſhall yet be forced to acknowlege, (Nehem. IX. 33.) " Thou art juſt, O " Lord, in all that is brought upon us, for thou haſt done right but " we have done wickedly."

F I N I S.